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Sat 1/25
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Thu 2/20
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**Renaud Capuçon**, violin

Sun 4/5
### Apollo's Fire and Chorus: J.S. Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*

Thu 4/23
### Chineke! Orchestra
**Kevin John Edusei**, conductor
**Sheku Kanneh-Mason**, cello

## JAZZ

Sun 9/8
### Snarky Puppy

Sat 10/19
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Sun 12/1
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Tue 12/10
### Sheku Kanneh-Mason, cello

Wed 2/26
### West-Eastern Divan Ensemble

Tue 3/3
### Emanuel Ax – Leonidas Kavakos – Yo-Yo Ma

Sat 3/14
### Hélène Grimaud, piano

Sun 3/22
### New York Philharmonic String Quartet
**Anne-Marie McDermott**, piano

Fri 3/27
### Sir James Galway and Lady Jeanne Galway

Thu 4/2
### Benjamin Grosvenor, piano

Fri 4/17
### Emerson String Quartet

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### Grupo Corpo

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### Teać Damsa *Loch na hEala (Swan Lake)*

Fri-Sat 2/21-22
### Dorrance Dance

Wed-Sat 3/18-21
### *ANTHEM*
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Thu 4/9
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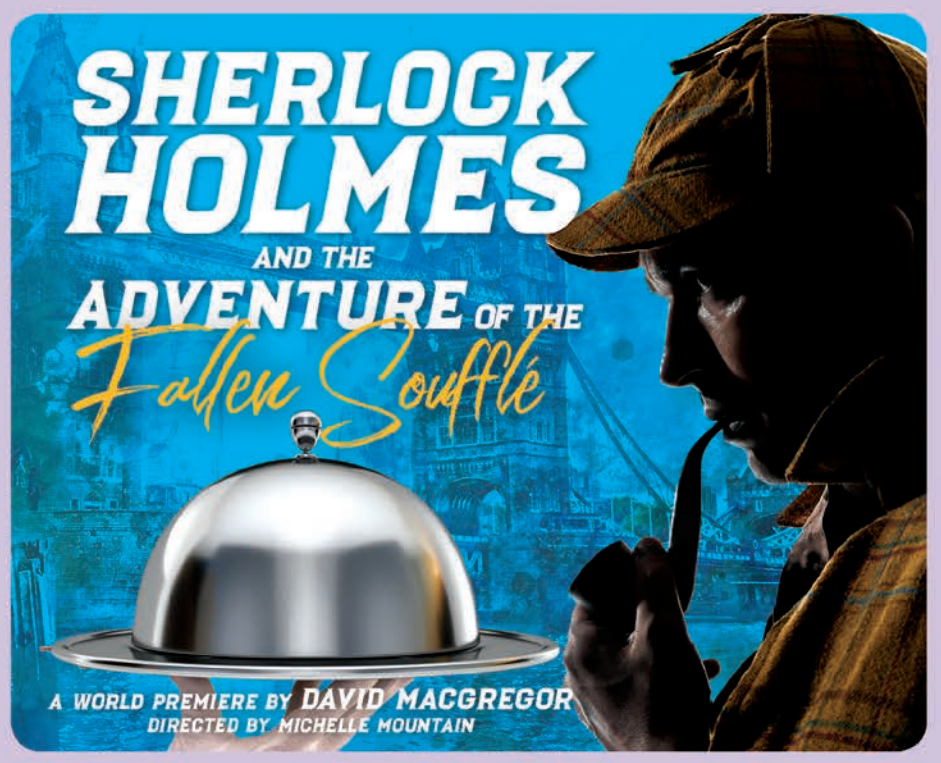


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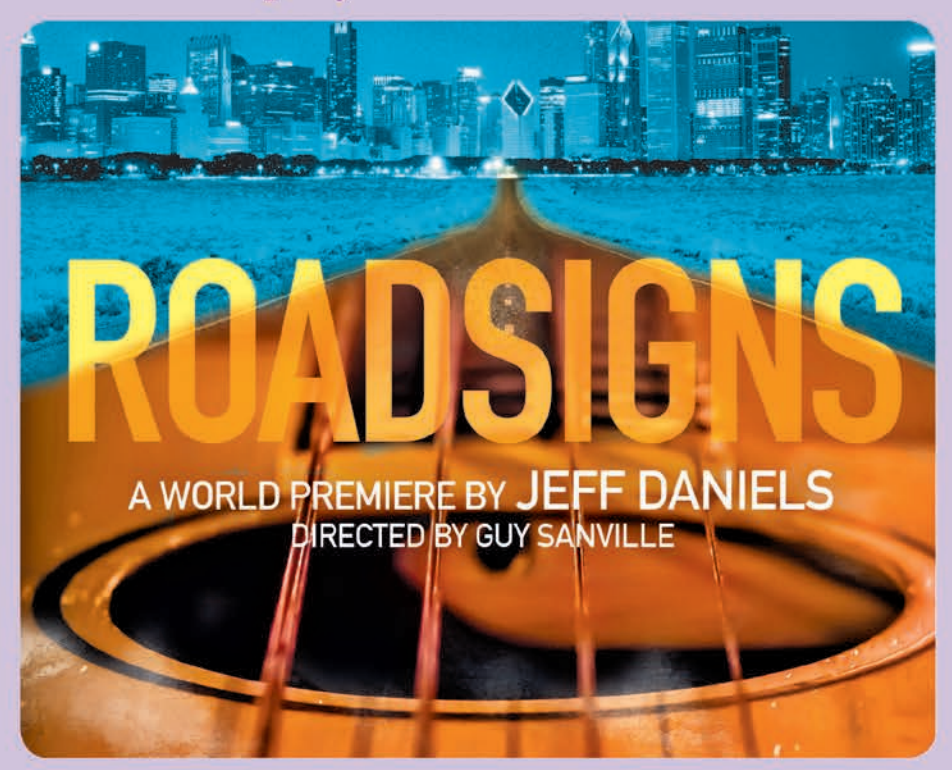


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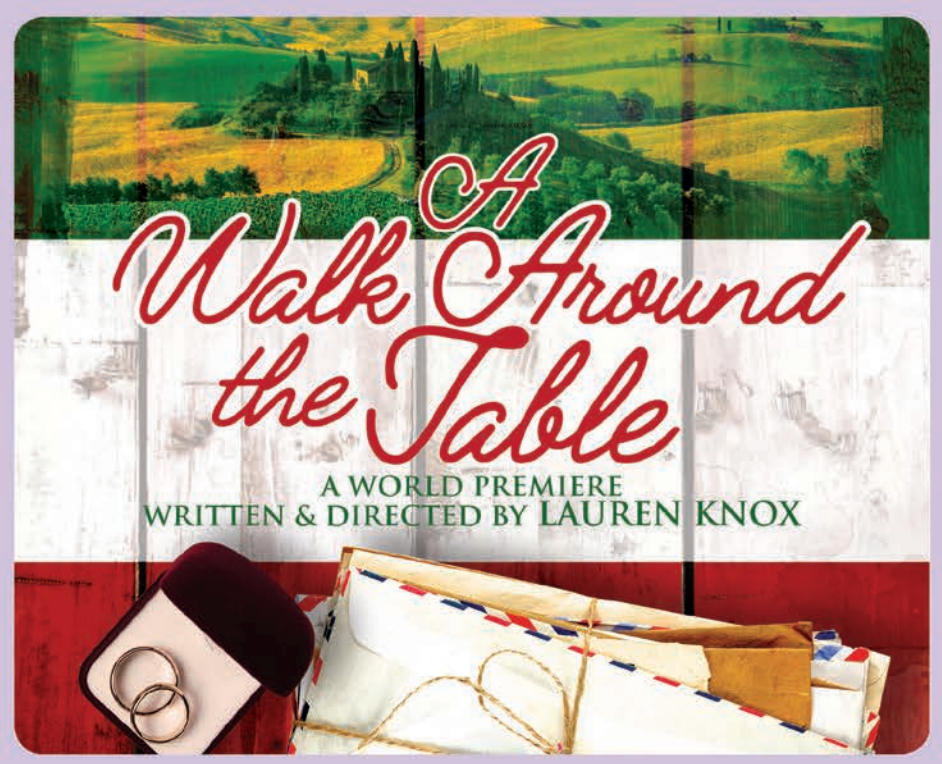


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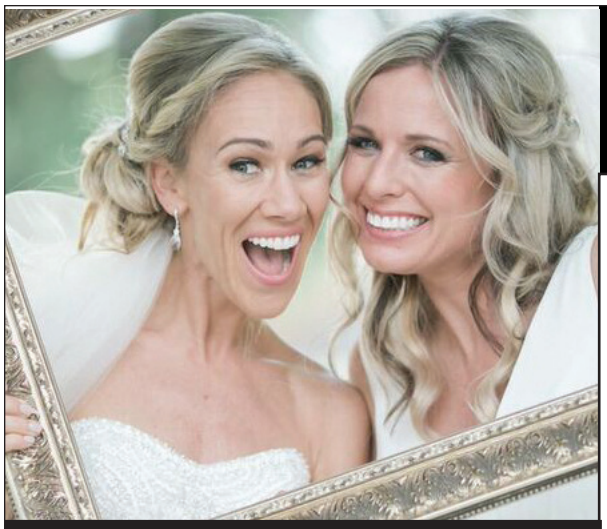

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# Michael Rowady Opens Up About His Past and Equality Michigan's Future

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

## Grosse Pointe Proud

When Michael Rowady recalled speaking before 3,000 people at Grosse Pointe Pride this June, the Equality Michigan board chair and managing partner of Canner, Canner & Rowady described the experience as one of the highlights of his life.

"I came full circle," Rowady explained. "It was in the place that it was the hardest to come out to. I'm speaking at one of the schools I went to, feeling completely supported by people in the community that I love. ... I've always wanted to be the guy up on stage and at the end of a speech, people go, 'Wow, that moved me to do something.' Or [if] there's a kid sitting there, pondering something terrible, somehow I can affect him."

Rowady added that some of those words from that speech — which were largely impromptu, after abandoning his prepared remarks at the last minute — would likely be used in his address at Equality Michigan's 2019 Fall Reception happening on Friday, Sept. 13.

"We're very excited," Rowady said of the upcoming gala. "I think it's the key civil rights event of the year for the LGBTQ community. One of the reasons is that it's coming at a time where we're really in the thick of everything from the white nationalist threat to the recent murders of LGBTQ people locally ... that's one of the reasons why we're raising money: to enable us to expand the organization and move forward."

## Twist of Fate

As confident as he is in his identity today, it wasn't always like this for Rowady. Growing up with four brothers, a busy mother and a father who worked in the auto industry, he said he never thought he was gay and it didn't come to his mind. It was only in college when he began meeting many LGBTQ people that he became curious.

"At the end of my time [at the University of] Michigan I had a girlfriend, and right as I started law school at the University of Detroit-Mercy we broke up. And I knew in my head it was ready for me to ... be part of this community, because it was not something I was going to be able to suppress forever," Rowady said. "So, instead of holding it in and getting married, I decided that I felt I knew I was gay and to proceed that way."

Upon graduating, Rowady started work as a legal clerk in the law office of Geoffrey Fieger. However, he was closeted in his professional life.

One of Fieger's cases that gained tremendous notoriety involved "The Jenny Jones Show." It began as a familiar setup: on the show an individual was told he had a secret admirer and would meet that person before a live audience. The twist, however, was that it was a same-sex crush. The "reveal" that happened was awkward and embarrassing, and shortly thereafter the "admirer," Scott Amedure, was murdered by his crush. Eventually, the killer went to prison for 22 years.

During the wrongful death lawsuit, Rowady was tasked with writing the complaint against Warner Bros., the parent company of "The Jenny Jones Show." By strange coincidence, Rowady's boyfriend happened to be in the jury pool.

Though the jury selection process occurred while Rowady was out of the country, Rowady explained what occurred when Fieger questioned his boyfriend.

"He was asked about whether or not he knew of any gay attorneys, things like that. Through the circumstances, my name came up. And the courtroom, which I would say a good chunk of them knew who I was, was kind of like, 'Wow, Mike's gay.' So that's how I was outed. In a very public format like that," Rowady said.

At that point, Rowady had already had a bad experience coming out to his parents, and that dynamic took some time to resolve. In his professional life, he said people felt bad for him. At that time there weren't many out gay attorneys in the area either, so he decided to move to "get out of Michigan and experience different things."

He met a man and in 2000 moved to San Francisco. But after four years, Rowady said he realized his career prospects were limited, he missed his family and he felt perhaps he'd had enough of the party scene. After a phone call with his father, Rowady was sure Michigan was where he belonged.

## Catalyst

Asked about his role as an Equality Michigan board member over the last five years, Rowady was clear about his active part in the organization: "I don't join organizations and sit quietly."

He was also upfront that despite his lifelong passion for politics, he wasn't an activist when he joined the board. He said the more he learned, the more he wanted to help change laws in the state.

EQMI Chair since January, Rowady said he considers himself a leader who is suited to the position.

"Sometimes you need ... a catalyst," Rowady said. "I believe I have a unique ability to kind of push people, motivate people, get people fired up."

Yet he also recognizes that he needn't be the smartest person in the room: collaboration benefits everyone. Rowady also acknowledged that during the past several years his organization has seen its fair share of staff turnover, board member resignations and has struggled to remain sustainable. He addressed that directly.

"We remain sustainable by being a more nimble organization," Rowady said. "It's difficult in that it's a statewide organization. Our reach is bigger than a lot of the other [LGBTQ] organizations in the area. But I think the most important thing is that we've reached out. I have meetings with the chairs of all of the major [LGBTQ] organizations. We're all in this together. We have to work together.

"The other organizations are rooting for us," he continued. "This community ... doesn't do well without an advocacy organization or a victim services organization. So, we are very much needed. It is my goal, it is my challenge and my charge to maintain this organization into the future the best I can while I am chairman. I cannot predict what will happen after me, and I cannot fix what occurred before me. What I can do is where I am now."

Sustainability requires having staff focused on what will have the greatest community impact, Rowady explained. That means a smaller organization overall, but he'd like to see an expanded victim services program with more counselors.

## Giving Thanks

Rowady expressed congratulations for the staff and called Executive Director Erin Knott a gem. He added that he never wants to raise his profile or the board's above those who work for Equality Michigan.

"They're all stars in their own right," Rowady said. "These really are incredible workers. The fact is that they're the ones doing the work. We're just making sure they're able to do it."

Outside of his work with Equality Michigan, Rowady maintains an active interest in politics. He said he's considered running for office someday, but right now he loves being an attorney. Frequently a host of fundraisers for political candidates, he held one at SoHo in Ferndale for Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence's reelection campaign last year. Rowady's parents attended.

Michael Rowady attending the Democratic Presidential cnadidate debates in Detroit last month.

"The things that were discussed there, all of the things about the gay community, my parents probably wouldn't have listened to years and years ago," Rowady said. "I was proud. They were proud. We came full circle. And it was a very good moment."

*Find out more online at equalitymi.org*

# Jason Hoskins for Southfield City Council: 'We Can do Great Things if we Have the Right Voices'

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

## Millennial Perspective

Jason Hoskins believes Southfield has a great foundation. And he sees tremendous potential.

"I never thought I'd be actually running for office," said Hoskins, a candidate for Southfield City Council. "For as long as I can remember, public service is something I wanted to do. In my role in Sen. Moss's office, I've been able to work with the city a lot; I live here … so this is the area I've grown to love. And working with the city at the state level, we've been able to do a lot of great stuff — but I see all the potential."

At the age of 35, Hoskins is in a unique position as a candidate for Southfield City Council, where the average age of council members is 61. He considers that a benefit.

"This is a goal of the city, to try to bring more young people to the city," Hoskins said. "And I think if you're trying to bring more young people to the city … it's good to have those young voices there, too. I want to be part of those conversations because I think we can do a lot of great things here if we have the right voices."

Despite his comparative youth, Hoskins' resume boasts accomplishment and experience. A political science major at Eastern Michigan University, Hoskins then earned a master's in public administration with a concentration in local government. Later, he received a law degree. In addition, Hoskins taught at Lawrence Tech University and has been active with the American Civil Liberties Union. It was because of an internship in former Gov. Jennifer Granholm's policy division that Hoskins said he realized his calling for public service.

After law school, Hoskins interned for State Rep. Rudy Hobbs, where he came to find his interest and talent for constituent relation.

"I feel like most people … don't know who their state legislators are," Hoskins said. "And so, if they found us, it's usually they went through a lot of other people. They're probably at their wit's end, a little frustrated, and so it's nice to be able to help them once they get to us or be able to point them in the right direction."

It was in then-State Rep. and now-state Sen. Jeremy Moss's office, where Hoskins is his legislative director, that Hoskins has been able to pursue his interest in policy. And it's where he's been able to work directly on issues that affect Southfield.

On the state level, Hoskins has worked to advance Southfield in a number of ways, in areas including neighborhood revitalization, protecting the environment and economic development.

## Top Priorities

Hoskins sees great potential in attracting more people to Southfield — or giving them reasons to stay. He said he's encouraged about talk of creating a little downtown in the Metro Detroit suburb, not far from the Southfield Civic Center campus. Hoskins said he believes some kind of center attraction is exactly what the city needs.

"I think a lot of people … from Southfield, they grow up here and they end up leaving. They feel like there aren't things to do. You kind of either live here or you work here, but you don't live here, and work here and play here," he said. "We have a daytime population of 175,000 people, and our normal population is 73,000. So, trying to capture some of those people and making sure they stay here is very important to me, because when there are more people here … that helps everybody."

Neighborhood revitalization is at the top of Hoskins' list, too. He helped Sen. Moss craft a bill that provides tax incentives to homeowners in certain neighborhoods. And, noting that Southfield has a great housing stock, he stressed the importance of maintenance.

"People care very much how their neighborhoods look, how their properties look," Hoskins said. "And so I want to make sure they have all the tools available to make sure they can take care of their properties here in Southfield."

> *"I think when you know somebody who is of the LGBTQ community, it makes it a lot easier for you to accept others. It's easier to demonize people when you don't know them. But when it's like your son, or your daughter, or nephew … or city councilperson, all of a sudden, they're real people now."*

## "This is Definitely Doable"

Hoskins would not be the first openly LGBTQ person on the city council in Southfield. Not only was Sen. Moss a council member, the current mayor of Southfield, Ken Sivers, is openly gay as well. Still, Hoskins said that for a long time he wasn't confident that running for elective office was a possibility for him — that maybe he should be satisfied with public service but not launch a campaign of his own.

What may have changed Hoskins' mindset is working for Sen. Moss, whom he considers a role model.

"He has certainly shown me the way, and shown me this is definitely doable," in terms of running for office, Hoskins said.

"Sen. Moss will always say, 'When people say or talk about some gay agenda, well my gay agenda is to make sure the roads are fixed. Or to make sure your government is working well,'" Hoskins said. "And I think that's what most people care about."

What can be an added challenge for Hoskins, though is being an LGBTQ person of color. He elaborated on the significance of representation, for both communities.

"Seeing people that look like you, it matters," Hoskins said. "It can be quite a weight on you. And I'm used to that, being a person of color, period. You don't have to add letters after that. A lot of times I've been the only person who looks like me in a room. And when you have to add a person of color plus LGBTQ, I've got to make sure I'm good for the LGBTQ community and the black community."

Hoskins also talked about how representation influences the broader community, too, in terms of acceptance. And ultimately, the impact that had on him.

"I think when you know somebody who is of the LGBTQ community, it makes it a lot easier for you to accept others. It's easier to demonize people when you don't know them. But when it's like your son, or your daughter, or nephew … or city councilperson, all of a sudden, they're real people now," he said. "We've come a long way. We're more accepting, to where I don't feel like I had to be in the closet as I'm running for office here."

## Tthe Next Level

Hoskins acknowledged that Southfield has undergone a lot of changes in the past generation, as many cities have. However, he's certain the city he loves and calls home is on the upswing — and that may not just be youthful optimism.

"In the next few years, there's gonna be so many changes for the better here in Southfield," Hoskins said.

He then mentioned a recent story in Business Insider that ranks Southfield as one top the 25 suburbs in the country where home values are rising the fastest.

"We've always been a great place. I like to think I'm building on the legacy that so many other people who are in elected office have started," he said. "And I'm hoping that if I am elected, that I can take Southfield to the next level, build on the progress that we're making now, because we've got a lot of potential here. And very soon, everybody's gonna see it."

*Learn more about Jason Hoskins online at jasonhoskins.com.*

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# Educating, Equipping and Empowering

## Lambda Legal's New Midwest Director Wants to See Michigan's LGBTQ Community Thrive

**BY EVE KUCHARSKI**

> *"And since the last election and seeing the renewed assaults on the LGBTQ community and as a proud gay man myself, I thought that that was not a better place for me to spend my energy and my time and my life than Lambda Legal."*

Whether it's fighting for the rights of service members with HIV, aiding couples with custody battles or helping to secure marriage equality, Lambda Legal has a history of impact litigation that aids LGBTQ people in all walks of life. Earlier this year, the 47-year-old nonprofit hired Brian Richardson as its Midwest regional director who will be responsible for programming and outreach efforts in the states of Ohio, North and South Dakota, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri and Michigan. He said he's eager to "help elevate" the "good work happening across the Midwest" and "push back" against policies and rules that discriminate.

"In some states we're taking multiple steps forward but in other states in our region we're taking multiple steps back," Richardson said. "How can we as an organization, and we more broadly as a community, ensure that we continue to move forward in some of those places, and help make sure that none of our states fall behind?"

For right now at least, the answer is to learn. Regarding Michigan specifically, Richardson said he's beginning his educational process by taking time to visit. So far, he's taken trips to Southeast Michigan, but he plans to make more to other parts of the state, too.

"My first goal in Michigan is to meet people and listen and figure out how we can help the good work that's already happening in Michigan," he said. "... Historically, we've also had a good presence in West Michigan and we're looking to build that presence too, but the goal is to ensure that folks know that Lambda is there in Michigan across the entire state."

### Fresh Eyes

Despite still being new to Michigan's specific struggles, Richardson sees the potential for many pro-LGBTQ policies to move forward. He said that the "changes in the governor's mansion" in the November 2018 election were a boon to both Lambda Legal's and Michigan's fights for equality. In particular, the election of Dana Nessel to the role of attorney general, whose work along with Lambda Legal's was instrumental in securing marriage equality in 2015.

"We have had, historically, a large diet of activity in the state of Michigan where we made real change, not just for our plaintiff's in the state of Michigan but change that has reverberated across the country. And I think that our current docket, and some of the current cases that we're working on in Michigan and some other states, too, have that same potential," he said. "But as we've seen in other times, if we want to make real change, it's really not just in the courtroom, because if we win a case that's only one step, we also need to win the hearts and minds of people across the state and make sure they understand the cases that we're presenting, why it's so vital that LGBTQ people and those with HIV have the opportunity to thrive."

### Roots and Future Goals

Despite Lambda Legal's focus, Richardson's professional background has not centered around law. He's hopped from public, private and nonprofit in roles like a communications manager at Google, working with U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-La.) and being a senior leadership team member at Chicago's LGBT community center. He does say, however, that he's dedicated his life and career "around making the world a better place and figuring out how I can take my skills and experiences and apply them to organizations and movements where I think I can make a difference."

Richardson said that it was the last election in particular that motivated him to seek a job where he could be of service.

"And since the last election and seeing the renewed assaults on the LGBTQ community and as a proud gay man myself, I thought that that was not a better place for me to spend my energy and my time and my life than Lambda Legal," Richardson said.

But for him it's about more than just passion, Richardson said that his varied career has given him a well-rounded experience that uniquely equips him to "take care of the other things so our lawyers can keep lawyering."

"Because when our lawyers can focus on the case at hand, we win. And if I can do my work, then they can stay focused on theirs," he said. "... And so, my goal right now is to listen to those in Michigan, but long-term once I get settled in, is to make sure that Lambda Legal is there not just as a support but we're there helping folks in communities, winning hearts and minds, educating folks and equipping and empowering LGBTQ community members to continue to advocate."

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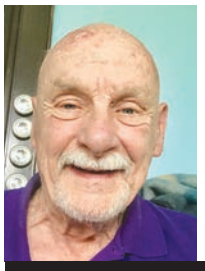


# Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

## When Gay Boys Turn 50 Gaily

*This column first appeared in BTL Sept. 2018*

A 50th anniversary production of Mort Crowley's groundbreaking play "The Boys in the Band" closed on Broadway Aug. 12 of this year, with big-name stars Jim Parsons (who has said goodbye to TV's "Big Bang Theory"), Andrew Rannells, Matt Bomer and Zachary Quinto.

"Boys" was — what else? — a complete, nostalgic, box-office hit. A frank, honest look at gay life as lived pre-AIDS. An on-stage wake up call to a frightening devastation yet to come.

Mort Crowley's "The Boys in the Band" opened Off-Broadway in 1968. I bought a copy of the play while visiting in Chicago and read dialog aloud while driving back to Detroit with my then partner Larry.

We saw a local production a few years later at the long-vanished Rivera, movie house turned legitimate stage, starring Wayne State University theater major Paul Pentecost.

Seeing gay life as we sometimes found ourselves living it proved fascinating: a big city birthday party turned "truth game," with much drinking, lotsa line dancing to the sweet turn-on sounds of Burt Bacharach's "The Look of Love." A play about us.

The play's opening was timely, one year before New York City's liberating Stonewall Riots (The same year Rev. Troy Perry started the first gay lib church in Los Angeles.). Change was in the air.

"Boys" was exciting on two counts: It was gay from start to finish, with camp humor putdown, and — score one up for me — I had spent a romantic summer week with one of its Off-Broadway production actors Frederick Combs.

I met "Honey Combs" in a gay bar. He was appearing in 1966 in 18-year-old British playwright Shelagh Delaney's international hit, and later movie, "A Taste of Honey" at the Fisher Theatre. He played Geoffrey, a gay artist. It was his big break. The cast included legendary Uta Hagan and the start of a promising career.

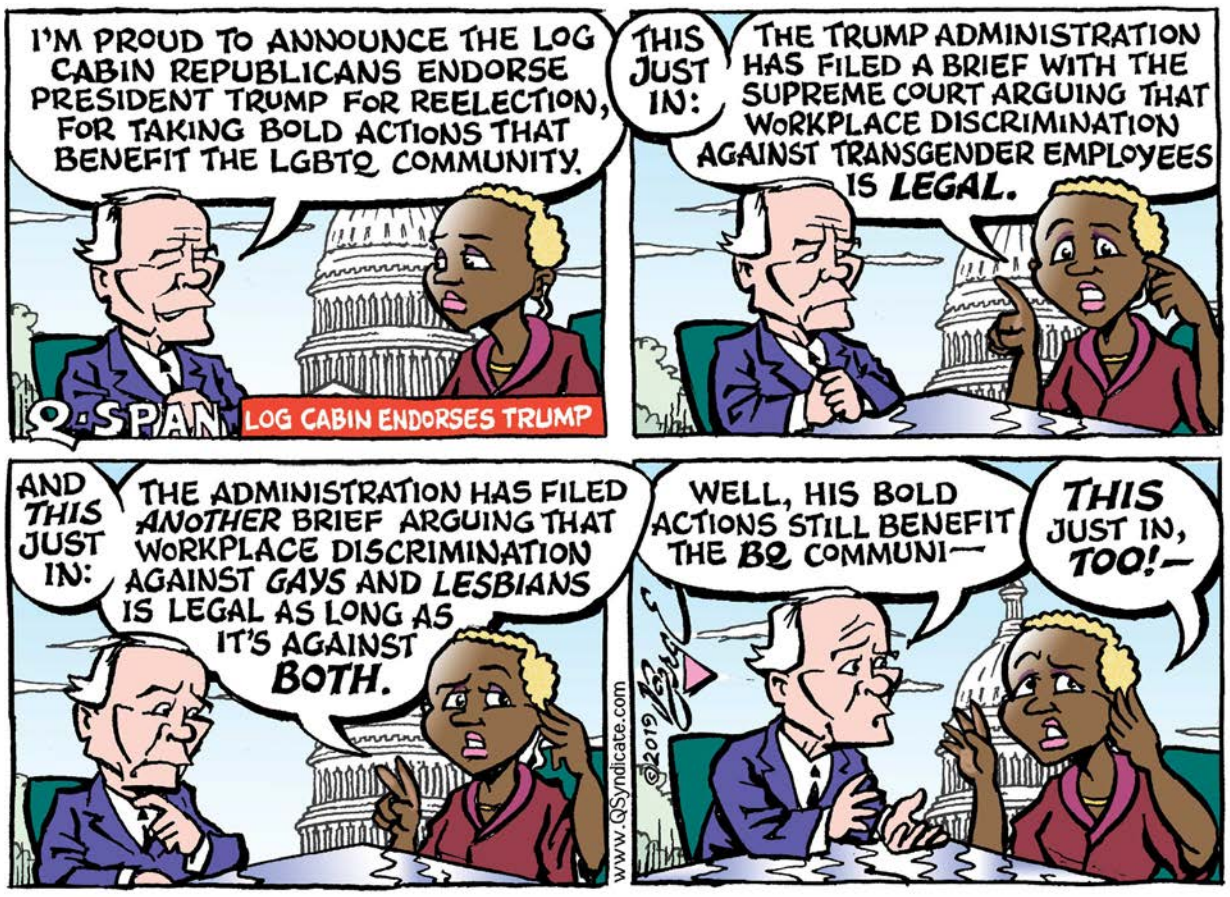
Freddy was staying at the Wardell Sheraton transients hotel, later Park Shelton Apartments (I later lived there for 24 years. The property was once owned by comic Gilda Radner, of Saturday Night Live fame.).

Freddy said his two high school drama teachers believed he had talent and much promise and paid for his ticket to New York to study acting (He also said he had been brought out by an Army sergeant when he was 16.).

I followed him to Chicago New Year's week, but was gently told our final curtain had rung down in Detroit. I never saw him again in person, but in 1970 had the pleasure of seeing him playing Donald when "Boys in the Band" was made into a movie (His thespian buns are glimpsingly preserved for posterity.).

Looking back at Crowley's pre-Stonewall play, given all that's happened — gay liberation, the AIDS crisis, Clinton's "don't ask, don't tell" policy, Ellen Degeneres, "Brokeback Mountain," "Angels in America" — "Boys" remains entertaining, well-crafted and compelling, if gay self-loathing.

See next page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# Viewpoint

## Let's End Anti-LGBTQ Discrimination in Michigan

BY SUSAN K. FREEMAN

Summer is here in Michigan; it's a bittersweet time. It's an opportunity to celebrate how far LGBTQ people have come and a reminder of how far we have to go.

The past year has been significant for Michigan in terms of LGBTQ acceptance. Last winter the Michigan Civil Rights Commission issued guidance clarifying that its state laws prohibiting discrimination based on sex also protect members of the LGBTQ community. Shortly thereafter, outgoing Republican Gov. Rick Snyder and incoming Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer issued executive orders protecting LGBTQ public employees from discrimination.

As important as these steps are, the grim reality is that Michigan is one of 30 states without express and enduring protections from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. That leaves our state's LGBTQ population – estimated at nearly 400,000 – vulnerable to harassment and discrimination.

"The Impact of Stigma and Discrimination Against LGBT People in Michigan" is a new study from the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law and Equality. It found that the Great Lakes State ranks 20th in the nation on public support for dignity and respect for LGBTQ people. Hostile attitudes toward LGBTQ community members, combined with insufficient legal protections, perpetuate stigma and discrimination. Ultimately, Michigan's failure to advance LGBTQ civil rights weakens the State as a whole.

LGBTQ people in Michigan disproportionately experience economic instability, with 28 percent of LGBTQ adults (compared with 20 percent of non-LGBTQ adults) reporting that their annual household income is below $24,000. The unemployment rate among LGBTQ adults (10 percent) is twice that of non-LGBTQ adults (5 percent).

Anti-LGBTQ discrimination has measurable effects on obtaining jobs and supportive work environments, the report conclusively demonstrates. A 2016 University of Michigan survey found that 28 percent of LGBTQ-identified faculty reported experiencing at least one discriminatory event in the previous year. The 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey found that more than one-quarter of transgender Michiganders have been fired, denied a promotion or not hired for jobs because of who they are. Employment discrimination like this holds back LGBTQ people in Michigan, blocks them from achieving their full potential and blocks the state's economic advancement as well.

Especially troubling are the ways that stigma and discrimination contribute to health disparities among LGBTQ people in Michigan. Adverse health outcomes, like major depressive disorders, binge drinking, substance abuse and suicidality, show up disproportionately in the LGBTQ

See **Transmissions**, continued on p. 17

*“... the grim reality is that Michigan is one of 30 states without express and enduring protections from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. That leaves our state’s LGBTQ population – estimated at nearly 400,000 – vulnerable to harassment and discrimination.”*

## ► Viewpoint

Continued from p. 16

community. LGBTQ adults in Michigan are more than twice as likely to be diagnosed with a depressive disorder than non-LGBTQ adults. And among students who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual, an alarming 53 percent say they have seriously considered suicide, compared to 17 percent of their heterosexual counterparts.

The harm of anti-LGBTQ discrimination isn’t limited to LGBTQ Michiganders: It also hurts the state economy. Studies show that if we reduce the disparity in major depressive disorder between LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ Michiganders by 25 percent, the state economy would benefit by $122.5 million annually. There’s no denying that workplace discrimination that results in lower earnings and unemployment can lead LGBTQ people – especially young people – to disproportionately require public benefits.

Despite the efforts of researchers and advocates to bring these concerns forward, Michigan leaders rarely engage in conversation about the social, economic and health effects of stigma and discrimination. Yet these problems cost the state’s economy tens of millions of dollars each year. Without a doubt, the state’s current legal and social landscape enable discrimination against LGBTQ people, which in turn imperils LGBTQ health and economic stability. It all adds up to major economic consequences for the state: a losing proposition for everyone.

It’s time to address these preventable harms to LGBT people and to the state economy.

Pride season is an opportunity to take steps toward becoming a state where everyone, including LGBTQ people, can thrive. When LGBTQ residents are safe and protected from discrimination, Michigan wins.

*For the full report visit: http://gaybe.am/ Dd. Susan K. Freeman, Ph.D., is a co-author of the study “The Impact of Stigma and Discrimination Against LGBT People in Michigan,” an award-winning author, and department chair and Associate Professor at Western Michigan University.*

## ► Parting Glances

Continued from p. 16

It’s characters are guys of another time and place who have yet to shake off the constricting onus placed upon them by religion, psychiatry, police, politics and even the Mafia - you name it. Just about everyone and everything straightjacketing.

Given as much, today we either like the play for its moments of history replayed or loath it for its internalized homophobia; nonetheless, it’s courageous, especially compared to cautious plays dealing with homosexuality preceding it, like “The Children’s Hour” and “Tea and Sympathy.” The boys in “Boys” are who they are in spite of a culture that demonizes them.

Frederick Combs’ later career included writing, producing, and directing an Off-Broadway mystery play that got soundly panned, prompting him to leave New York for LA. He then appeared in TV soaps and miniseries, and for a time ran his own drama school. He died from AIDS-related causes on Sept. 19, 1992.

He was 57. His acting talent, face — and rather memorable backside anatomy — are available for repeated viewing on DVD. I watched the movie this week and remembered when. ...

And as one of the old boys in an old band I’m still grateful to be tootin’ my horn. On or off-key.

*Charles Alexander is prolific both as a BTL columnist (700-plus columns) and as a well-known LGBT community artist (1000 Facebook images). He is a Spirit of Detroit Award recipient and an Affirmations LGBT CENTER Jan Stevenson awardee. Connect with him at Charles@pridesource.com.*

# Creep Of The Week

BY D’ANNE WITKOWSKI

**On the SHFA website, President John Hugo says, “Straight people are an oppressed majority. We will fight for the right of straights everywhere to express pride in themselves without fear of judgment and hate**

If you said the words “Super Happy Fun America” to me and then asked me what that was, I would have guessed it was the name of a low-budget, USA-themed amusement park with lots of red, white and blue cowboy hats, Big Macs at every concession stand and a requirement that everyone in attendance carry a gun.

That, it turns out, is incorrect. “Super Happy Fun America” is actually more awful than that.

It is, in fact, the name of the organization that put on the so-called Straight Pride parade in Boston on Aug. 31.

On the SHFA website, President John Hugo says, “Straight people are an oppressed majority. We will fight for the right of straights everywhere to express pride in themselves without fear of judgment and hate. The day will come when straights will finally be included as equals among all of the other orientations.”

That Hugo co-opts the language of LGBTQ equality groups is no accident. It’s clear that SHFA has done its homework.

In an interview on Fox’s “Watters World” before the event took place, Hugo is so unhinged that he makes host Jesse Watters, who is basically a palmful of hair gel in a suit, seem reasonable and smart.

“Are you just doing this as a joke to be provocative, or do you really feel this strongly about this?” Watters asks.

“No, no,” Hugo insists. “We knew we were going to trigger the left, and that’s why we called it Super Fun Happy America.”

“Can you understand why the LGBTQ community is a little bit upset by this?” Watters asks.

Hugo responds that Milo Yiannopoulos, a gay man who makes a living pissing gay people off to the delight of anti-LGBTQ right-wingers, is the head of their parade.

“We’ve got gay people who are helping us,” he says. “We’ve got gay allies.”

Hugo also says they want to include an “S” in LGBTQ because “it’s more inclusive that way.”

And then he laughs in this really creepy way. It’s uncomfortable to watch Hugo because this is clearly not a man who is confident in himself, especially compared to the overly confident Watters. That makes him the perfect person to lead this charge of hetero-misfits.

In a video of the parade posted online, there’s a giant pro-Trump float (fun fact: that monstrosity originated in Michigan and is available to rent for “weddings, parades, birthdays, rallies” according to its Facebook page) and lots of white men in red MAGA hats. There is also someone in a shark costume carrying a sign that reads, “Straight Lives Matter” next to someone wearing an inflatable T. Rex costume who is waving a Trump 2020 flag.

In other words, it was a circus, only it was a circus filled with people who are terrible and no fun at all. It’s the bleakest parade I’ve ever seen.

In the video, it’s hard to see who is part of the parade versus who covering the event (lots of people seem to be wearing press badges). There are also lots of police officers.

According to The Guardian, the event “drew more than 1,000 counter-protesters and a few hundred supporters.”

In other words, not an ideal ratio for the straight priders.

SHFA Vice President Mark Sahady declared the event “a YUGE success.”

And for them it was. The fact that they got a couple-hundred people to show up is pretty impressive.

It’s hard to tell how seriously SHFA expects people to take it. On the one hand, they claim to be very serious. On the other hand, well, they call themselves Super Happy Fun America.

But it would be a mistake to dismiss the whole thing as a joke. The aim is to minimize the very real struggle for LGBTQ equality. That a straight pride parade exists seems, on the surface, like a perfectly reasonable response to the fact that an LGBTQ pride parade exists.

But, of course, it isn’t. There is no history of heterosexual oppression (unless you count the religious right’s war against birth control and sex outside of marriage, but that’s just heteros oppressing themselves). There hasn’t been a systemic effort to deny or punish the existence of straight people.

Presenting the straight pride parade as if it is equally legitimate (or equally illegitimate, which seems to be the argument SHFA is going for) to a traditional Pride event is to intentionally diminish LGBTQ Pride.

It also allows people who reject the idea that LGBTQ people are deserving of equality and respect to celebrate their hatred openly.

It’s another example of the majority seeing equal rights as a zero-sum game. It’s not super, it’s not happy, it’s not fun. But it is America, for better, or, in this case, for worse.

## Pregnant Trans Men Face Difficulties

BY STAFF REPORT

**HOROFARE, N.J. —** Transgender men who become pregnant are at increased risk for depression and gender dysphoria; however, getting the proper medical care can be challenging due to a lack of knowledge among health care providers, according to a literature review published in Maturitas, a European menopause journal, and reported on by Healio Psychiatry.

Although some transgender men undergo hormonal treatment and/or surgery, many retain their capacity to become pregnant. Currently, medical providers are largely unprepared to care for transgender people, who also face psychosocial barriers for care, such as social discrimination and rejection from insurance companies to cover gender-affirming treatment, Justin S. Brandt, MD, assistant clinical professor in the department of obstetrics, gynecology and reproductive sciences at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, and colleagues wrote.

"In our study, we wanted to explore evidence-based practice for transgender men during pregnancy, especially for men over the age of 35," Brandt told Healio Psychiatry.

However, after performing an extensive literature review, the researchers found limited research on transgender men, obstetrical care and outcomes.

The main findings, based mostly on cross-sectional surveys and expert opinion, were that transgender men and cisgender women have similar attitudes about pregnancy, according to Brandt.

In one study, unintended pregnancy occurred in about 30 percent of transgender men, suggesting it may be more common than previously believed. The researchers highlighted the importance of contraception counseling, Healio reports.

# Reclaim is Busting Stigma About Abortion

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

## An Inspired Idea

It might seem unusual to plan a burlesque show to raise funds for an organization that advocates for issues as serious as abortion and reproductive freedom, but Jordan Wyer explained how the idea came about during a strategic planning meeting for her organization.

"We were talking about who we wanted Reclaim to be and what we wanted to become and how we were going to help people," Wyer said, of the organization whose mission is to "reclaim" dignity around, confidence in and support of abortion and reproductive rights through advocacy and education, community engagement, storytelling and abortion funding.

"And one of our board members mentioned that we should bust abortion stigma — which is one of the things we like to do — through burlesque, who also use their 'bust' in different ways."

Not only did she discover that a former clinic employee who is a performer was keen on the idea, Wyer also found tremendous interest among the burlesque community in lending their talents to the endeavor.

Thus, "Busting Stigma" was born, Reclaim's first-ever fundraiser, to be held Saturday, Sept. 7. A raffle, palm and tarot readings, food truck, cash bar and more are planned.

"These are people that have reclaimed their own bodies," Wyer said. "And that empowerment is definitely something that drew me towards burlesque" as the focus of the fundraiser.

## Abortion Rights: An LGBTQ Issue

Those same themes of empowerment and reclaiming one's body are what make abortion rights a universal issue, an issue that is sometimes given less attention within the LGBTQ community than perhaps it should. Wyer, who is an ally, explained.

"I think first and foremost ... that women are not the only people that have abortions. We have to stop erasing the trans community from the abortion conversation," she said.

What underlies both abortion rights and LGBTQ rights is the right to make decisions about one's body. Wyer cited a parallel between laws that would dictate how one can love and whom one can marry with when and how one can have children.

"It's really giving the power back to the individual and doing what's best for them as opposed to what the law thinks that you should do," Wyer said.

Not only that, "Everyone knows someone who's had an abortion, and everyone loves someone who's had an abortion," Wyer said. "I think that for so long it's been just a woman's issue, and that's not how pregnancy works."

Wyer also talked about how close we are to losing the right to abortion altogether or having access drastically limited in Michigan, as petitions for two ballot initiatives are currently being circulated.

"We need to be diligent in what we're signing and also who we're electing," Wyer said. "And making sure that pro-choice policy comes first, because without abortion care we have no way to control our reproductive futures."

---

*On Sept. 7, though, Wyer will be diligent about ensuring that Busting Stigma is a success. Find out more online at https://secure.givelively.org/event/reclaim-inc/busting-stigma-a-burlesque-show.*


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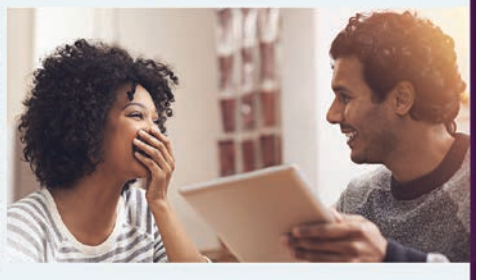

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# Texas Group Advocates for LGBTI Migrants

BY MICHAEL K. LAVERS

**SAN ANTONIO** — A Texas-based immigrant advocacy group continues to provide assistance to LGBTI migrants who hope to find refuge in the U.S.

Cristian Sánchez of the Refugee and Immigration Center for Education and Legal Services on July 18 told the Washington Blade during an interview at his San Antonio office that RAICES last fall sent staffers to Mexico City to meet a "self-formed" group of LGBTI migrants from Central America. Sánchez said RAICES bought the migrants bus tickets to Tijuana, a city on the Mexico-U.S. border, and secured housing for them once they arrived.

"We made the decision to help them the rest of the way because they were suffering some discrimination within the caravan and just felt their needs weren't really being listened to in the group decisions," said Sánchez.

Sánchez told the Blade he soon found himself running two shelters for LGBTI migrants: One in Playas de Tijuana and a second close to downtown Tijuana.

"I basically jumped into it," said Sánchez. "The next four, five months of my life was running that shelter (in Playas de Tijuana) and another shelter."

Sánchez said the group of LGBTI migrants who RAICES helped in Tijuana "all made it to the U.S." and are now "detained" throughout the country, including in Louisiana where Yariel Valdés González, a Blade contributor from Cuba who has asked for asylum in the U.S., remains in the custody of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Dozens of trans women remain in ICE custody at the South Texas Detention Complex, a privately-run detention center in Pearsall, a town along Interstate 35 that is roughly 60 miles southwest of San Antonio.

Sánchez has created what he described to the Blade as a "temporary transition house" in San Antonio for trans women who were previously in ICE custody at the South Texas Detention Complex. Sánchez said RAICES provides them with a place to sleep, eat, shower and "feel like a human again after a very dehumanizing few months of attention."

"We have clothing and makeup to feel like yourself again, to self-actualize," he said.

Sánchez added many of the trans migrants with whom RAICES works "have been rejected by their families and don't have a place to go in the U.S."

"The level of violence has pushed them to make this journey and seek asylum, even not knowing what their future is going to hold," he said.

A group of transgender women who were previously in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody arrive at a house in San Antonio that RAICES operates. (Photo courtesy of Cristian Sánchez/RAICES)

RAICES was founded in 1986 as the Refugee Aid Project.

The organization has 130 staffers who work from offices in San Antonio, Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin and Corpus Christi. RAICES is among the myriad organizations that strongly oppose the Trump administration's overall immigration policy, which includes the "remain in Mexico" program that forces migrants to remain in Mexico as they await the outcome of their asylum cases and a "safe third country" agreement with Guatemala.

Sánchez said RAICES works with the American Immigration Council to help detained migrants find lawyers who will represent them pro bono.

Sánchez told the Blade that more than a dozen trans women who RAICES has represented have won their asylum cases. Sánchez also said RAICES is able to use donations it receives to pay migrants' bonds that secure their release from ICE custody.

Sánchez said 25 trans women were in ICE custody at the South Texas Correctional Complex when he spoke with the Blade.

He told the Blade they called him regularly, "which is really intense because situations are really bad inside." Sánchez, who was at the facility a few hours before he spoke with the Blade at his office, said trans detainees are often kept in segregation and staff are not properly trained on trans-specific issues.

"It's been some real trials and tribulations," he said. "I don't think that the officials there were prepared to have a trans pod, to host a trans pod."

The South Texas Detention Complex in Pearsall, Texas, on July 18, 2019. Transgender women are among those who are currently in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody at the facility that is roughly 60 miles southwest of San Antonio. (Washington Blade photo by Michael K. Lavers)

Sánchez spoke with the Blade less than two months after Johana "Joa" Medina León, a trans Salvadoran woman, died in an El Paso hospital three days after ICE released her from their custody. Roxsana Hernández, a trans Honduran woman with HIV, was in ICE custody when she died at a New Mexico hospital on May 25, 2018.

Immigrant rights advocates have said Hernández and Medina did not receive adequate medical care while in ICE custody.

The trans women's families have filed wrongful death lawsuits. ICE has previously told the Blade it spends more than $250 million a year on healthcare for detainees and regularly points to a 2015 directive that requires personnel to, among other things, provide trans detainees with access to hormone therapy while they are in their custody.

"The conditions they are facing at Pearsall are the exact same conditions where that happens," Sánchez told the Blade, referring to the Hernández and Medina cases and to trans women who remain in ICE custody. "A lot of them are sick. They don't get attention until things have escalated."

"It's just not how somebody should live," added Sánchez.

Sánchez further described the situation for trans detainees at the South Texas Correctional Complex as "really, really bad" and "scary."

"A lot of the women are really demoralized and that's really the whole point, to get you to give up," he said.

*This article originally appeared in the Washington Blade and is made available in partnership with the National LGBT Media Association.*

# Pro-LGBT Measures Up in Health Care

BY STAFF REPORTS

**WASHINGTON —** Strides are being made in the world of LGBT health care despite a hostile presidential administration, Human Rights Campaign officials write in their annual Healthcare Equality Index.

Among the strides: more than half of Index participants now have written gender-transition guidelines; 75 percent of hospitals surveyed offer trans-inclusive benefits — an eight percentage point increase over last year, and numbers that bring them on par with their corporate counterparts, as measured by HRC's 2019 Corporate Equality Index.

There was also a 35 percent increase in training hours recorded — clocking in at more than 94,000 hours of LGBTQ care training provided; and a 60 percent increase in the number of Index participants whose electronic health records capture a patient's sexual orientation, and a 40 percent increase in the number of Index participants whose electronic health records capture a patient's gender identity.

Of the 1,000 hospitals that did not actively participate in the Index but were included based on HRC Foundation research, only 67 percent have patient non-discrimination policies that include both sexual orientation and gender identity, and only 62 percent were found to have an LGBTQ-inclusive employment non-discrimination policy. The equal visitation policy, in place at 90 percent of facilities that did not actively participate, is the only aspect in which this group comes close to matching the rate of the participating facilities, HRC officials said.

A record 680 health care facilities actively participated in this year's survey.

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# Exclusive: Log Cabin Executive Director Resigns Over Trump Endorsement

**BY CHRIS JOHNSON**

The executive director of the Log Cabin Republicans has resigned following a controversial decision by the organization's board to endorse President Trump, the Washington Blade has learned exclusively.

Jerri Ann Henry, who was the first woman to lead the LGBT Republican group, formally submitted her resignation Friday and left Monday after discussions with board members characterized as "harsh," sources familiar with Log Cabin told the Blade.

The resignation follows intense criticism of Log Cabin, which announced its support for Trump earlier this month without its members having met with him or having received any explicit commitments in exchange.

Sources said Henry's discontent with Trump and dissatisfaction with Log Cabin's approach to defending its Trump endorsement in the media were key among her reasons for stepping down.

Charles Moran, a Log Cabin spokesperson, confirmed Henry "did tender her resignation," saying that occurred Monday.

"The final date of her employment is undetermined at this time," Moran added. "The board's executive committee will proceed with an orderly transition to ensure nothing falls through the cracks."

Moran declined to comment on the circumstances of her departure, saying he "wasn't on the phone call she had with our board chairman" and "can't speak to the tenor or tone of the conversation."

"We thank her for her service to our organization and wish her well in the next chapter of her career," Moran added.

Henry's name was not signed to the op-ed in the Washington Post endorsing Trump, which was signed by Log Cabin board chair Robert Kabel and vice chair Jill Homan. The op-ed was largely based on the Trump administration's stated global initiative to decriminalize homosexuality and an HIV/AIDS plan — both of which have yet to yield any results.

Although Henry — a Republican who's an alumnus from the marriage-equality movement — was hired under a promise to advance pro-LGBT policies within the Republican Party, her voice had been effectively sidelined for about two months.

Sources say disagreements about the direction of Log Cabin — with some wanting to pursue pro-LGBT policy goals, while others wanted to support Trump — led to a decision to prohibit Henry from speaking publicly for the group.

Henry, the latest to leave Log Cabin after the Trump endorsement, joins former board member Jennifer Horn, who has been public about her resignation, saying she couldn't look her children in the eye and belong to an organization that supported Trump.

Casey Pick, who once worked as programs director for Log Cabin, has repudiated the organization in a Facebook post. Additionally, Robert Turner II, who once led Log Cabin's D.C. chapter, announced he'd leave Log Cabin in a Facebook message.

A less public resignation not previously reported, sources said, was board member Rachel Hoff, who gained notoriety during the 2016 Republican National Convention for arguing for LGBT inclusion in the Republican Party during the platform drafting process.

(The platform ended up reiterating the GOP's support for a Federal Marriage Amendment and suggested parents should be able to send their kids to "ex-gay" conversion therapy. It was deemed the most anti-LGBT ever at the time by Log Cabin itself .)

Hoff didn't immediately respond Monday night to a request for comment. Henry also didn't respond to a request for comment.

News of Henry's departure comes just weeks before its "Spirit of Lincoln" reception in D.C. on Sept. 17. In years past, the annual event was both a dinner, usually with high-profile Republican attendees, as well as a reception, but for this year, the event is reduced to simply a reception.

Log Cabin's remaining board members consist mostly of its California contingent, including Charles Moran, who joined the board recently and now serves as Log Cabin's spokesperson.

Following the organization's endorsement of Trump, it was Moran — not Henry — who went public in the media to explain the endorsement.

Sources say the board decided to endorse Trump at this time, flouting its customary practice of waiting to make a decision until the Republican National Convention, because some board members were angry Log Cabin didn't endorse Trump in 2016.

When those members realized they had the votes to endorse Trump, they rushed to make it happen despite not having the customary commitments for Log Cabin's support, such as meeting with the presidential candidate up for endorsement, sources said.

Moran, however, disputed that account, saying the endorsement "came at the request of our chapter leaders."

"In our bylaws, we are required to survey our chapters to solicit their input," Moran said. "The result was almost unanimous in support of endorsing President Trump for re-election. We declined to endorse in 2016, so our chapter leaders wanted to make sure their voices were heard clearly and direction taken into consideration for 2020."

Moran added the situation with Trump being an incumbent president played a role in the early endorsement.

"This is a reelection campaign and the ramp-up happens earlier for the incumbent, which is completely normal," Moran said.

The influence of U.S. Ambassador to Germany Richard Grenell, who's the highest-ranking openly gay person in the Trump administration, was also a factor in the endorsement, especially on the California members of the board, sources said.

In addition to the California board members, 11 of the organization's 42 chapters are in California, according to Log Cabin's website, so chapters in that state hold considerable sway over the group.

Both Moran and Grenell served as delegates from California supporting Trump at the 2016 Republican National Convention.

Moran downplayed the influence of Grenell on Log Cabin, but affirmed the organization supports his efforts spearheading the global initiative to decriminalize homosexuality.

"Ambassador Grenell remains busy abroad with his portfolio in Berlin, and we wholeheartedly support his efforts leading the international decriminalization efforts, which we have publicized in our meetings and covered on our social media," Moran said.

*This article originally appeared in the Washington Blade and is made available in partnership with the National LGBT Media Association.*

# Brazil Ends Government Funding of LGBTI Television Shows, Films

**BY FELIPE ALFACE**

**SÃO PAULO —** Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has suspended public funding of LGBTI-specific television projects and films.

The decision, which was published in the Official Gazette on Aug. 21, specifically applies to four LGBTI productions and others from categories that include youth, quality of life, society and the environment.

Bolsonaro's government has said the suspension, which will remain in place for 180 days, is necessary to compensate members of the Audiovisual Sectoral Fund Committee. The regulation also requires a review of the applied criteria to select projects.

Bolsonaro, on the other hand, in a Facebook Live video on Aug. 15 spoke about LGBTI-specific projects that were slated to receive federal funds. One of the things he said was he was able to search for government-funded projects with sexuality and LGBTI-specific issues on the go and he was planning to stop it since they shouldn't receive public incentives.

"If someone from the private sector wants to put money into those productions that is fine," said Bolsonaro. "But they won't receive public money since these projects go against the values of traditional Brazilian families."

It was, therefore, not a surprise when a week later the decision was made public.

A known homophobe, Bolsonaro incited anti-LGBTI prejudice and hatred during his campaign as he did when he represented Rio de Janeiro in the Brazilian Congress. But Bolsonaro's son, Eduardo Bolsonaro, who has been nominated to become Brazil's next ambassador to the U.S., during an interview with the PBS NewsHour last week said he was sure his father would love him if he were gay.

The president's record is far from what Eduardo Bolsonaro claims, and that is why his decision about federal funding of LGBTI-specific television and film projects has already received strong reactions from both the audiovisual sector and from within the government itself.

Culture Secretary Henrique Pires resigned in protest against what he called censorship of public television projects as soon as Jair Bolsonaro made his announcement. Senator Fabiano Contarato challenged the decision in the Brazil's Supreme Court, arguing it is unconstitutional.

LGBTI films were 'building a story'

Julia Katherine, a transgender actress, screenwriter and director, has sharply criticized Jair Bolsonaro.

"LGBTIQ+ filmmaking was building a story," she told the Washington Blade. "There were some advances in the last 10 years in visibility especially in regards of transgender issues. And now we arrived in a place where our stories are being censored."

"As a trans filmmaker I ask myself where are we going to be in the next three years as we keep going with the Bolsonaro administration," added Katherine. "It took so long for us as LGBTIQ+ people to recently arrive at a place of protagonism in some productions both in front and behind the camera and now our narratives are being censored."

Katherine also told the Blade that LGBTI Brazilians "were still at the beginning of that visibility movement" and Bolsonaro "is trying to interrupt it."

"It is like taking us back in the closet with fear, panic that we may not keep working," she said. "There is an uncertainty around our employability. But it is important to make something clear to him and to the world: we won't back down. We are certain that we will find a way to produce our content and keep doing our work. We'll keep moving forward. They won't shut us down."

*This article originally appeared in the Washington Blade and is made available in partnership with the National LGBT Media Association.*

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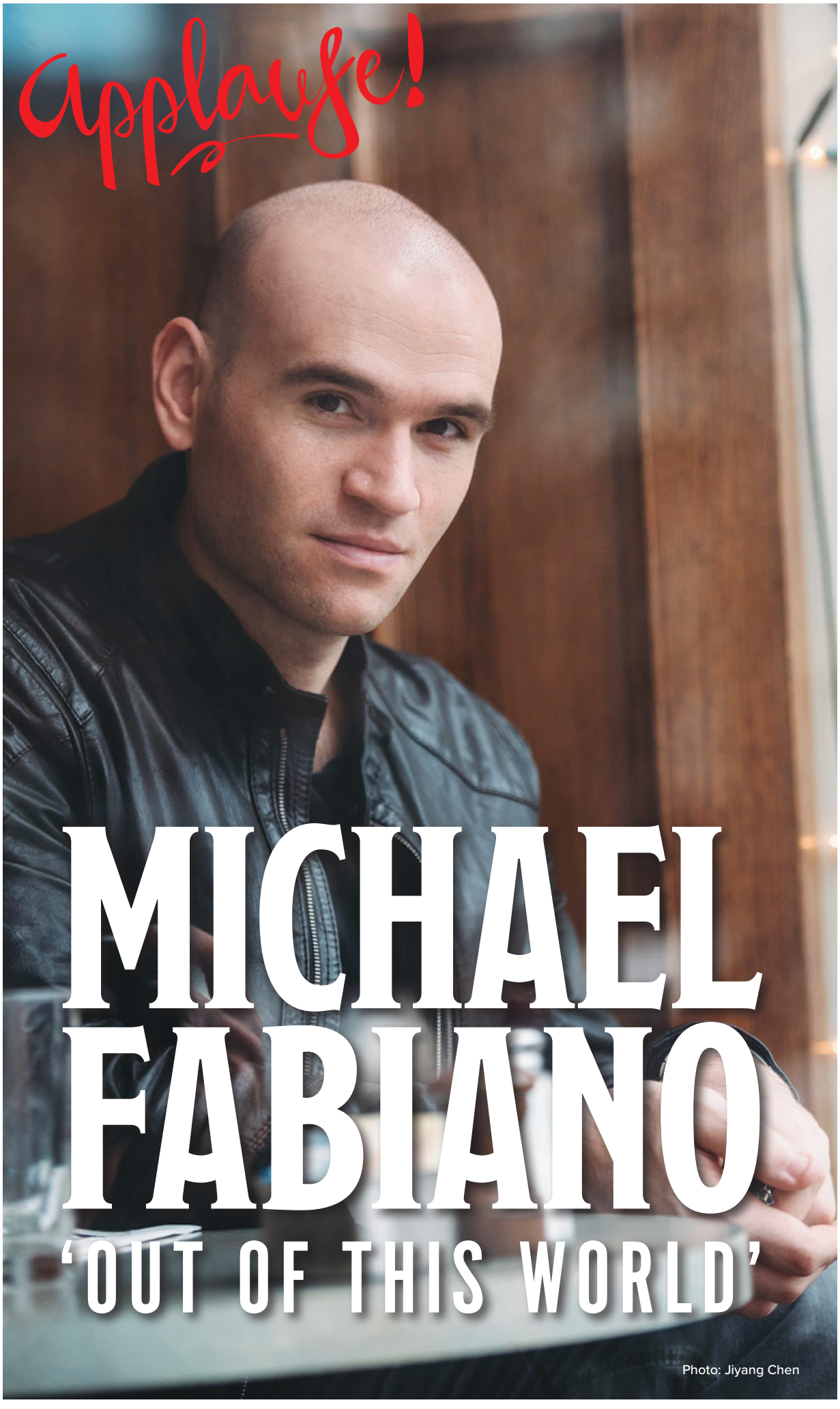


# Tenor Talks Confidence in Performance, Pushing Boundaries and Being LGBTQ in Opera

**BY EVE KUCHARSKI**

Michael Fabiano's approach to his opera career has served him well. Described by The Independent as "out of this world" and The New York Times as "one of the most exciting, sought after singers in the world," those following opera today will likely have heard of the rising tenor. He made a splash at just 22 years old when he beat out thousands of other hopefuls at the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions in 2007. That same year, he had his stage debut at the Stadttheater Klagenfurt as Alfredo in "La Traviata."

It's evident that his reputation as a risk-taker has been as rewarding as it has been well-earned. The University of Michigan School of Music grad has logged performances across the globe in such famed venues as Carnegie Hall, Opera National de Paris and Teatro di San Carlo. Even in his spare time Fabiano favors the bold, having earned his pilot's license. Now, the jet-setting singer will appear at the Michigan Opera Theatre on Oct. 12 for An Evening With Michael Fabiano. In advance of the performance, the openly gay star caught up with Between The Lines to talk about his current projects and his thoughts on portraying an openly LGBTQ character.

**A necessity for a succesful opera singer is confidence and stage presence. You've mentioned before that you attribute your high school debate team as having fostered that in you.**

Absolutely. I always reference debate and sometimes people are confused by it, but the reality is that debate really gave me the skills to stand in front of lots of people, speak with my full voice, speak about matters of politics, life — whatever it was — and, by the way, be able to step into the shoes of both sides of an issue. To really be able see things from multiple perspectives. I would debate topics about the morality of authoritarian government and if it was preferable to the opposite and I'd have to be able to argue both sides of that coin in various rounds. Not because I wanted to, but because that's the way the set up was. That's what provides empathy and perspective. And a great artist is a person that's empathic, but even more than that is a person that is capable of multiple layers of expression.

**Right, if you're portraying a villanous person, for instance, they might not see themselves in that way, even if the audience might.**

Macbeth is a villain, maybe not. It's an argument that one could make.

## INFO

### An Evening With Michael Fabiano

At the Michigan Opera Theatre on Oct. 12 at 6:30 p.m. The theater is located at 1526 Broadway St. in Detroit. Find out more information online at michiganopera.org or by calling 313-237-SING [7464].

**You were raised in a musical family and got introduced to the art form young, but you've mentioned before that it's often "otherized" by people who associate it with elitist stereotypes. Could you elaborate on that point?**

The biggest problem that opera has right now is its messaging. We message, or the opera world generally messages, that opera is for people that have money — as I call champagne socialists or rich conservatives, one of the two. And I'm not marginalizing those people, both of them are important, both the conservatives and the socialists, but opera is for everybody. When Verdi wrote his works, he wrote it for the large swath of people that had no money, nothing, couldn't pay anything. And one can go to the opera today for $20; it can cost people $150 to go to a Knicks game in New York City or a Giants game. And that's all I have to say, that we're in a stage now where we have to be doing a better job of our message and we're not doing that.

**Is that where co-founding ArtSmart comes in?**

So, ArtSmart is an organization that creates a framework for children to get free vocal instruction on a weekly basis that concurrently allows those kids to have the opportunity at a greater musical experience than they have at school. We introduce them to opera and classical music events, we do it in a very specialized way and it's growing aggressively.

**Speaking of growth, in your career you've made a name for yourself as a risk-taker, as someone unafraid to step forward out of his comfort zone. How do you go about choosing your next career moves?**

I would say the phrase that I used the most is calculated risk-taking. Risks are items that can cause distress, duress or despair from the individual if the action doesn't take off but can yield a great reward if it does. And so, what I do is I look at all items that could cause me distress but, more potentially, could lead me to success, and I calculate the odds of that success ratio, literally. I really break it down to numbers and then I act. It's as simple as that. And it sounds more convoluted than it is, but it's literally AP statistics.

**What's a role that you'd be interested in taking on that is completely new to you?**

Andrea Chenier. It's a calculated risk because it comes with the public perception that I'm a different type of tenor than I am now, and so it has the expectation that I will deliver a certain type of voice, even though I'm confident that I have that kind of voice at this point.

**More than ever LGBTQ themes are being represented in opera. Would you be open to portraying an LGBTQ character?**

I believe in the intention of the libretto and what's on the page. So, works that have existed, I will do as they exist. I'm not interested in throwing green paint on a Picasso and saying that it's new; I'm interested in doing the work as it is. I'm pretty constructionist when it comes to opera. If you're doing "La Boheme" you do "La Boheme," if you're singing "Traviata," you do "Traviata," you know? We don't change the story for the sake of new social implications. I think that, first of all, it's confusing to the public. It might be interesting for certain groups of people, but [for] the public at large it's trickier to sell. And we have to not just be thinking about small groups of people at the time, we have to think about critical mass, and are we moving the needle for everybody? So, that leads me to the second answer, which is: if there were a work that was created that featured a role where I could be a character that struggled with sexuality or was gay or that was something new, of course I would do it. Absolutely. That's a given. I would never say no to that.

**Have you been offered newly written work as an LGBTQ character?**

People have not come to me that often with a proposition of new work, I've only had a few. I would love to do it. I've said this a million times: I'd love to be included in new projects and if it had a certain LGBTQ implication or some sort of different implication than the norm, certainly. Absolutely.

**As historians reassess older creative works, be they opera or another medium, existing and previously misunderstood LGBTQ themes are being uncovered as originally part of the story. Have you ever been in a production where you felt that could be the case?**

Here's the thing: I did "Don Carlo" three years ago and if you know the story of "Don Carlo," the relationship between Rodrigo and Don Carlo is very close. It's almost questionable that those two were not lovers, one could argue that they were. Don Carlo says a million times how much he loves Rodrigo and how much he cares for Rodrigo and he's mortified and can't believe that he's died. And in this production we did, as Rodrigo was dying I laid a kiss on him. Now, the director said it wasn't a sexually based kiss, it was a kiss of respect. It could be stretched in multiple ways to believe what it really was. So, if there's a point that is legitimate where it can be construed that there is that implication, I will do it. I will not do it for creating a false

See **Opera**, continued on p. 26

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Continued from p. 25

implication or something that is not in line with the story.

**Along the lines of being LGBTQ and in opera, what was it like when you announced your engagement publicly? Was it something you worried about impacting your career or did you not think anything of it?**

No, I didn't think anything of it. I got all of these messages, "I had no idea you're gay." Then I got all these angry messages from people saying that I was hiding my sexuality for a while. There was a period, I admit, where it was harder for me to talk about my sexuality earlier in my career. I was single for a very long time and that's one of the reasons people might not have known. I mean, I wasn't actively dating for many years. None. I hadn't seen people for, I don't even know, eight years, seven. So, it's logical that a lot of people might not have known who might have come on board in the middle of the rise of my career. Because the first thing I don't say is, "Hi, I'm Michael Fabiano and I'm gay." To me, that's not relevant. I would hope that the LGBTQ community would think the same, because what's relevant is that we're people who do great things. And so, when I announced my engagement, I just announced it. I'm just engaged to Bryan, (laughs) that's it.

**Were you ever told to hide your sexuality from the public because it might impact your career?**

Yes. There was the irrational fear from some that talking about sexuality would dissuade critical mass from really caring about who I am and wanting to buy in to my career. And so, I was forced to hide. And as I've said to people before, hiding is even worse than being in the closet. I was out, it's not like I wasn't out of the closet — all of my friends and family knew who I was from a very young age, but the reality is that I didn't talk about it. In my career I just didn't go there enough, so people just didn't know. And that sense of being a ghost, that's hard (laughs), it's not easy.

**I've heard from other LGBTQ performers that coming out has helped them to be more expressive in their work. Has that been the case for you?**

Honestly, I didn't notice the difference. I can't relate to that, because one thing I'm very good at — I'm not bragging I promise — is compartmentalizing. I have a foundation I run that. I think about that, I don't think about anything else. When I'm flying a plane, I don't think about anything else. When I'm singing, I don't think about anything else. I have family members that are sick and dying, I'm not thinking about anything else. So, I just really know how to sectionalize my life and not let it bleed into my other affairs.

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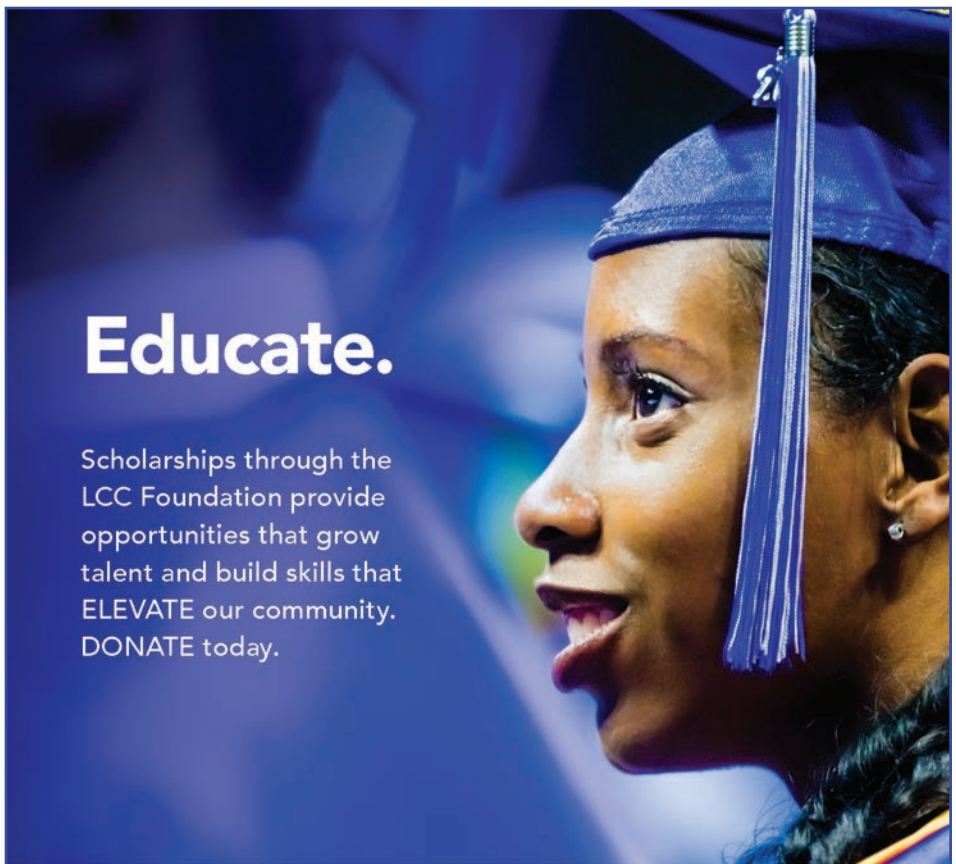
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# Applause!

## Michael Feinstein and Storm Large

**Shaken & Stirred**

**Saturday, Oct. 12, 8 p.m.**

**Cobb Great Hall**

**Wharton Center for the Performing Arts**

**whartoncenter.com**

Five-time Grammy Award-nominated pianist and vocalist Michael Feinstein joins forces with Pink Martini's Storm Large to reimagine standards and modern classics that are chilled, shaken and stirred into an unforgettable evening of music.

Michael Feinstein is well known as the Ambassador of the Great American Songbook. Lauded for his Emmy-nominated PBS specials, NPR series and concerts spanning the globe, Feinstein delighted audiences in his last appearance at Wharton Center nearly 10 years ago. He joins forces with vocal powerhouse and force to be reckoned with, Storm Large, for an unforgettable evening of music. Storm Large, the longtime lead singer of popular music group Pink Martini, and Feinstein will pay tribute to a wide range of artists such as Al Green, Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole, James Taylor, Stevie Wonder, Smokey Robinson and many others, joined by a stellar five-piece band.

To date, he has performed at such prestigious venues as The White House, Buckingham Palace, Carnegie Hall, the Hollywood Bowl and the Sydney Opera House. Feinstein married producer Terrence Flannery in 2008 after having dated for more than a decade. The two were married by family court judge and television personality Judge Judith Scheindlin, also known as Judge Judy. Flannery has played a large part in Feinstein's career for years.

Feinstein currently serves as artistic director for The Center for the Performing Arts in Carmel, Indiana. Feinstein and Flannery have homes in New York, Los Angeles and Indiana.

See **Applause**, continued on p. 30

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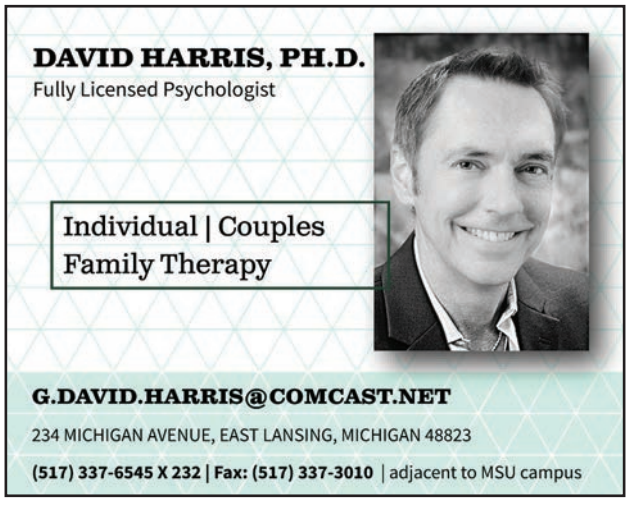
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Applause!

## Dionne Warwick

**Sunday, Oct. 6, 7:30 p.m.**

**Sound Board at the MotorCity Casino & Hotel**

**soundboarddetroit.com**

At 78 Dionne Warwick has had 56 singles reach the Billboard Hot 100 between 1962 and 1998 and has built a reputation as one of the most successful female vocalists of all time. Warwick, born Marie Dionne Warrick, started out singing gospel in her family group the Drinkard Singers with her aunt, legendary singer and backing vocalist Cissy Houston.

Her first foray into secular music came about when she followed her aunt's lead and started doing session and background work. She was singing backing vocals on the Drifters' "Mexican Divorce" when she caught the attention of producer Burt Bacharach. Burt and his songwriting and production partner Hal David signed her to a production deal and then secured a recording contract for her with Scepter Records.

Her first single was 1962's "Don't Make Me Over." The song reached No. 21 in the pop and No. 5 on the rhythm and blues charts and the Warwick-Bacharach/David partnership was off and running. Throughout the '60s, Warwick would score with such blockbuster hits as "Walk on By," "Message to Michael," "Do You Know the Way to San Jose," "I Say a Little Prayer" and many, many others. In less than a decade, Warwick had sold an estimated 35 million singles and albums internationally.

In the late '70s she signed to Clive Davis's Arista Records. She scored immediately with the Barry Manilow-produced "I'll Never Love This Way Again" and followed up with the smash "Heartbreaker," which was produced by Barry Gibb.

Warwick, an early supporter of HIV/AIDS causes, forever secured her spot in the hearts of the LGBTQ community with the release of 1985's "That's What Friends Are For," a collaboration with Gladys Knight, Elton John and Stevie Wonder that went to No. 1 on the pop, R&B and adult contemporary charts and raised over $3 million for AIDS research.

## Patti LaBelle

**Sunday, Oct. 20, 7:30 p.m.**

**Sound Board at MotorCity Casino & Hotel**

**soundboarddetroit.com**

These days Patti LaBelle is perhaps most famous for those delicious sweet potato pies she sells at Walmart. But the soul music legend has been singing for the masses for more than 50 years, first as frontwoman for the group Patti LaBelle & The Bluebelles, then the funk ensemble LaBelle and since 1976 as a solo artist.

That was the year that her signature tune, "You Are My Friend," appeared on her first solo album for Epic Records. Other hits continued during her epic years, such as "Joy To Have Your Love" and "I Don't Go Shopping," before she switched to Philadelphia International Records. Through PIR the now-classic "If Only You Knew" came to be released in 1983 and went all the way to number one on the rhythm and blues charts. Two years later, in 1985, LaBelle signed to MCA Records where she was immediately included on the soundtrack to the Eddie Murphy hit movie "Beverly Hills Cop." She scored two crossover hits on the soundtrack, including "New Attitude" and "Stir It Up."

Still, her biggest success lay in front of her. In 1986 she released the single "On My Own," a duet with Michael McDonald for her MCA debut album "Winner In You." The song went to number one on the R&B and pop charts and to number two on the adult contemporary chart. While this period might represent the peak of her career commercially, it wasn't until 1992 that she won her first Grammy Award in the category of Best Female R&B Vocal Performance for the album "Burnin'."

Since then, LaBelle has continued to release albums, books, fragrances and those delicious pies. She also continues to tour and at age 75 shows no signs of slowing down. See her at the Sound Board at MotorCity Casino & Hotel on Sunday, Oct. 20, at 7:30 p.m.

## David Sedaris

**Wednesday, Oct. 23, 7:30 p.m.**

**Fisher Theatre**

**broadwayindetroit.com**

David Sedaris has become one of America's best-known humor writers. The great skill with which he uses his satire and sardonic wit to slice through cultural euphemisms and political correctness only underlines his skill. Coming this October, the famed author will be coming to Detroit's Fisher Theatre.

Sedaris is the author of the collections of personal essays "Naked," "Me Talk Pretty One Day," "Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim," "When You Are Engulfed in Flames," "Squirrel Seeks Chipmunk: A Modest Bestiary" and "Let's Explore Diabetes with Owls," all of which have become bestsellers. Sedaris' pieces appear regularly in The New Yorker and have twice been included in the compilation book "The Best American Essays."

From the beginning, much of Sedaris' writing has taken on a tone of self-deprecation. His homosexuality also gets its fair share of coverage. Sedaris participated a documentary by David Thorpe called "Do I Sound Gay?" The film looks at stereotypes surrounding the speech patterns of gay men.

His most recent book is "Calypso." "Calypso," according to Alan Cumming of the New York Times Book Review, "Allows us to observe not just the nimble-mouthed elf of Sedaris's previous work, but a man in his seventh decade expunging his darker secrets and contemplating mortality.

"The brilliance of David Sedaris's writing is that his very essence, his aura, seeps through the pages of his books like an intoxicating cloud, mesmerizing us so that his logic becomes ours," Cumming continues. "... The geeks really do inherit the earth."

His sister is writer and actor Amy Sedaris and the two have collaborated under the name The Talent Family. Together, they have written six plays which have been produced at La Mama, the Lincoln Center and The Drama Department in New York City. These plays include "Stump the Host," "Stitches," "One Woman Shoe," which received an Obie Award, "Incident at Cobbler's Knob" and "The Book of Liz," which was published in book form by Dramatists Play Service.

## RuPaul's Drag Race Werq the World Tour

**Tuesday, Oct. 22, 8 p.m.**

**Sound Board at the MotorCity Casino & Hotel**

**soundboarddetroit.com**

When it first debuted on Logo in 2009, "RuPaul's Drag Race" was a pretty low-budget novelty. At the end of the first season, winner BeBe Zahara Benet received a grand prize of $25,000 and was crowned America's Next Drag Superstar. But like RuPaul himself, the show persisted. Production quality improved, prizes got better and by season four, the winner Sharon Needles took home a prize of $100,000, which remains the amount winners receive to this day.

Drag Race has inspired the spin-offs "RuPaul's Drag U," "Untucked" and "RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars." The highest-rated show on Logo, Drag Race switched to the more mainstream VH1 for season nine in 2017. And as if that weren't enough, RuPaul would go on to win three Primetime Emmy Awards for Outstanding Host for a Reality or Reality-Competition Program from 2016 to 2018. "Drag Race," as a show, won the Emmy Award for Outstanding Reality-Competition Program in 2018.

Through the show and a keen knack for self-promotion, RuPaul has built an empire releasing books, fragrances, dolls and music, much of which is played on the show and, as RuPaul reminds each week, is available on iTunes. RuPaul also produces RuPaul's Drag Con, the largest drag convention in the world. And for several years now, winners and popular contestants on the show have gone on tour during the off season.

For this Werq the World Tour 2019, entertainers include Aquaria, Asia, Detox, Kameron, Kim, Money, Naomi, Plastique, Vanessa aka Miss Vangee, Violet and Yvie. The show is hosted by longtime Drag Race judge Michelle Visage. So far, the tour is scheduled to make nearly 90 stops around the country as well as in Australia, New Zealand, Asia and Europe.

# Applause!

## Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin

**Wednesday, Oct. 30, 7:30 p.m.**

**Fox Theatre**

**313presents.com**

Billed as "A Fun Conversation with Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin," the Hollywood legends and stars of the Netflix series "Grace & Frankie" will amuse and entertain attendees by answering questions presented by moderator Mitch Albom.

Fonda was born to Hollywood royalty. She is the daughter of the late Henry Fonda and brother to Peter Fonda of "Easy Rider" fame. She is a two-time Academy Award winner and three-time Golden Globe winner. Known for roles in the "China Syndrome," "On Golden Pond," "The Morning After" and many others, Fonda first worked with Tomlin in 1980's "Nine to Five" alongside Dolly Parton.

A Detroit native, Tomlin started her career as a stand-up comedian. She developed a reputation for playing a bunch of oddball characters on the variety show "Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In" from 1969 to 1973. The following year, Tomlin made her film debut in Nashville, for which she won Academy and Golden Globe Award nominations. To date, she has received seven Emmy Awards, two Tony Awards and a Grammy Award.

Tomlin received the Mark Twain Prize for American Humor in 2003 and was the recipient of the Kennedy Center Honors in 2014.

On "Grace & Frankie," Tomlin's Frankie Bergstein plays unwitting nemesis to Fonda's Grace Hanson. But after the two women's husbands leave them – for each other – the two end up living together and a close but unlikely friendship is formed. The show's fifth season premiered on Netflix in January. So far, Tomlin has received four Emmy nominations for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Comedy Series for the show and Fonda has received one nomination for the same category.

## Carrie Underwood

**Thursday, Oct. 31, 7 p.m.**

**Little Caesars Arena**

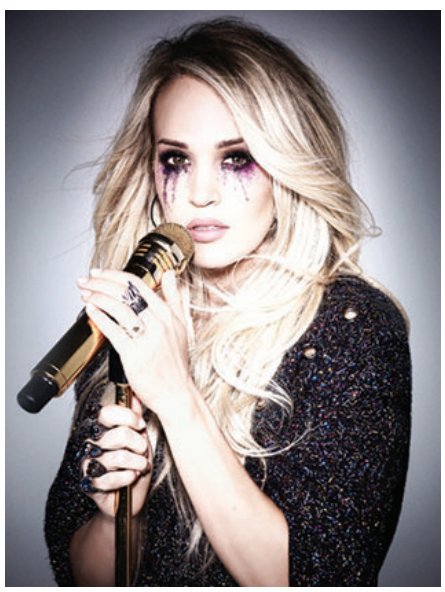
**313presents.com**

Country sweetheart Carrie Underwood is bringing her Cry Pretty Tour to Detroit this October on Halloween. Way back in 2005, Underwood wowed audiences of "American Idol" when she won the show's fourth season. What no one knew at the time is that she would go on to become the most successful "American Idol" winner of all time.

The same year she won, Underwood released her debut single. Titled, "Inside Your Heaven," the song holds the distinction of being the only country song to debut at No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100. Her first album, "Some Hearts," became the best-selling solo female debut album in country music history thanks to the success of such smash hits as "Jesus, Take the Wheel" and "Before He Cheats." Underwood would win three Grammy Awards for the album but she was just getting started.

Underwood would go on to sell some 65 million records worldwide. She has been inducted in the Hollywood Walk of Fame, the Grand Ole Opry and the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame. Underwood has to date received seven Grammy Awards, 14 Academy of Country Music Awards and nine Country Music Association Awards.

Thanks in part thanks to the success of "Jesus, Take the Wheel," Underwood has maintained somewhat of a good girl image. But she has faced a backlash in certain Evangelical circles for her public support of marriage equality. In a 2012 interview with British newspaper The Independent, Underwood said, "As a married person myself, I don't know what it's like to be told I can't marry somebody I love and want to marry. I can't imagine how that must feel. I definitely think we should all have the right to love, and love publicly, the people that we want to love."



# Applause!

## John Cameron Mitchell

**The Origin of Love Tour**

**Saturday, Nov. 2, 8 p.m.**

**Hill Auditorium**

**ums.org**

You know him as Hedwig from "Hedwig and the Angry Inch." John Cameron Mitchell co-wrote the play, which debuted in 1998 and ran off-Broadway for years and won an Obie Award, with Stephan Trask. A rock musical about an East German rock musician chasing after an ex-love who plagiarized her songs, the Hedwig character, whom Mitchell played in drag, has evolved over time in club and cabaret settings into a transgender rocker who had undergone a botched sex-change operation.

In 2001, Mitchell starred and directed in the feature film version of the play. For his efforts he would win Best Director at the Sundance Film Festival. His performance was also nominated for a Golden Globe Award as Best Actor in a Musical or Comedy. Both the play and the film were critical hits and have spawned cult following around the world.

"Hedwig and the Angry Inch" opened on Broadway in 2014 with Neil Patrick Harris in the lead role. It was directed by Michael Mayer and won four Tony Awards, including Best Actor in a Musical, Best Featured Actress in a Musical (for Lena Hall) and Best Revival of a Musical. Mitchell would reprise his role in the production for a limited run in 2015 and go on to win a Special Tony Award for his return to the role.

For his University Musical Society debut, Mitchell will be performing songs and sharing stories from the groundbreaking work. In addition to the U.S., "Hedwig and the Angry Inch" has been staged in London, Vienna, Rio deJaneiro, Toronto and more than dozen cities across the globe. It has become a cultural phenomenon, much like Cameron, himself.

## Celine Dion

**Tuesday, Nov. 5, 7:30 p.m.**

**Little Caesars Arena**

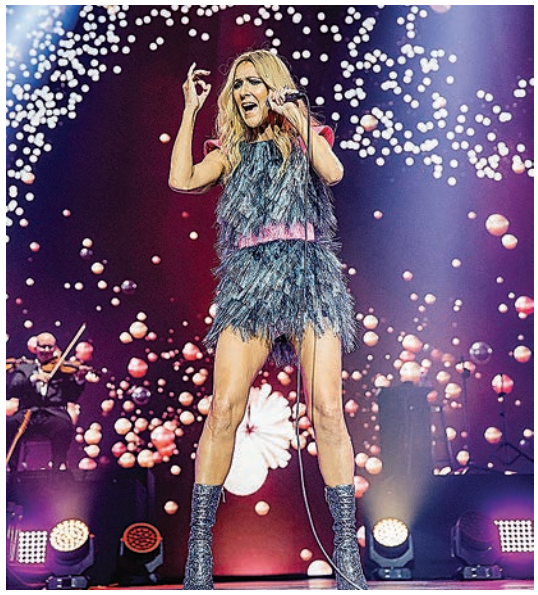
**313presents.com**

Oh, Canada! We have many things to thank you for but chief among them – or at least high on the list – must be Celine Dion. Celine Marie Claudette Dion hails from Charlemagne, Quebec, and was releasing French-language albums by the time she reached her teens. She won the 1982 Yamaha World Popular Song Festival and the 1988 Eurovision Song Contest. But it was in 1990 that she released her first English-language album and she did not fail to impress.

Her first single from the album Unison was "Where Does My Heart Beat Now," a top-ten hit. The following year, Dion sang the theme song to the Disney animated film "Beauty and the Beast" with rhythm and blues crooner Peabo Bryson. It was another top-ten hit and won an Academy Award for Best Original Song and a Grammy Award for Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocals. Other hits such as "If You Asked me To," "The Power of Love," "Think Twice" and "Because You Loved Me" were released and sold millions. In between her English-speaking albums Dion continued to release albums in French and those sold millions as well.

1997 would be one arguably her most succesful year yet when she once again sang a theme song for a film. This time it was "My Heart Will Go On," the theme from the blockbuster "Titanic." The song was a worldwide hit and became Dion's theme song. It won the Academy Award for Best Original Song and earned Dion two additional Grammy Awards for Best Pop Vocal Performance and the illustrious Record of the Year. The song, one of the best-selling singles of all time, would go on to sell over 15 million records.

Dion would continue to record and went on to have one of the most successful Vegas residencies of all time with her long-running show, titled "A New Day," at the 4,000-seat Colosseum at Caesar's Palace. The four-year residency grossed over $385 million and a drew more than 3 million people to 717 shows.



## Hello, Dolly!

**Nov. 19 – Dec. 1**

**Fisher Theatre**

**broadwayindetroit.com**

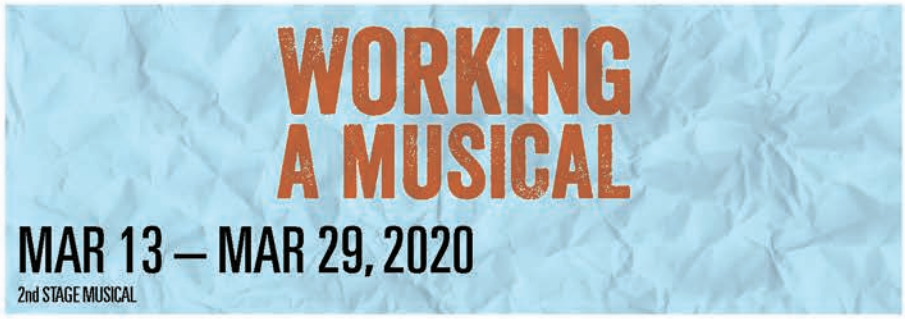
"Hello, Dolly!" won no less than four Tony Awards in 2017 including Best Musical Revival. The history of "Hello, Dolly!" is rich and dates back to 1964, when it first appeared on Broadway. "Hello, Dolly!" featured lyrics and music by Jerry Herman and a book by Michael Stewart. The play was based on the book "The Merchant of Yonkers," written by Thornton Wilder and released in 1938.

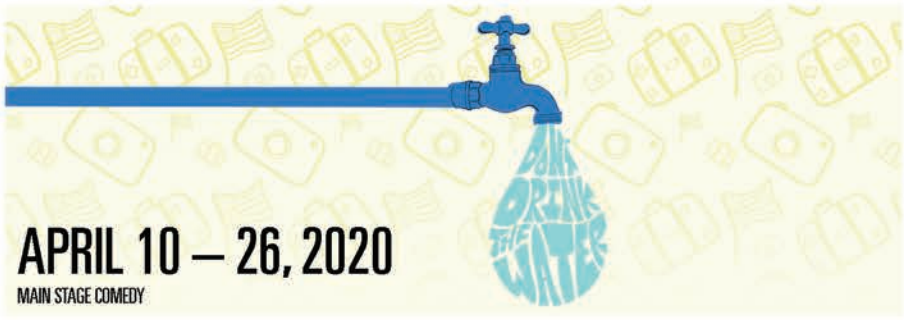
When it was produced on Broadway the show won 10 Tony Awards – a record that the play held onto for 37 years. The cast album reached number one on the Billboard album chart and would go on to be inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2002. The show has become one of the most enduring musical theater hits with four Broadway revivals and international success. It was also made into the 1969 film "Hello, Dolly!" which starred Barbra Streisand and won three Academy Awards.

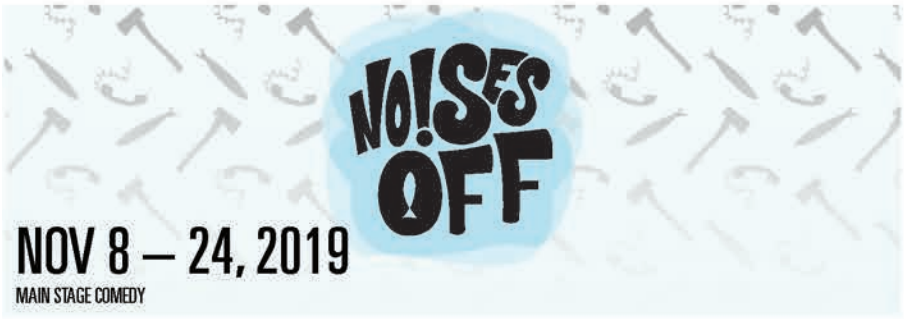
The film, like the play, tells the story of matchmaker Dolly Gallagher Levi who travels to Yonkers, New York to find a match for Horace Vandergelder, a "well-known unmarried half-a-millionaire." Carol Channing originated the role of Dolly on Broadway and would go on to reprise the role in a couple of revivals. Others who have also played Dolly on Broadway include Pearl Bailey and Bette Midler. Betty Buckley originally played Dolly on this tour but Dolly will be played by Carolee Carmello for the Detroit shows.

The version of "Hello, Dolly!" that is coming to Detroit pays homage to the original work of legendary director and choreographer Gower Champion – hailed both then and now as one of the greatest stagings in musical theater history.

# 2019/2020 SEASON 64





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# ACCIDENTALLY PERFECT

## Artist Pronoun Talks Inspiration for Latest Album

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

Breakups hit hard. Some hit harder than others. For Alyse Vellturo, better-known by fans as pronoun, three years after she broke up with her ex-girlfriend and it's still much of the creative fuel for her first full-length album "i'll show you stronger."

"I think Pitchfork [magazine] said it the best. I don't think they were trying to be nice, but I was like, 'That's exactly what it is.' They said, 'Vellturo's making music for herself alone,' and I was like, 'That's 100 percent true,'" she said. "When I'm making [music], it's usually because it's making me feel better and it's how I'm feeling and I'm recording it and, at the end of the day, I go back and listen to it."

Those feelings of catharsis and reflection are present on the album, and Vellturo's sharing them with audiences while she's on tour. On Sept. 9, she'll make her way to The Loft in Lansing.

Full of both personal thoughts and seemingly direct messages to her ex-girlfriend, "i'll show you stronger" takes listeners to the rocky end stages of Vellturo's past relationship. Still, despite that being its lyrical focus, it'd be wrong to call "i'll show you stronger" sad. Its unique combination of jumpy, nostalgia-laden, synth-layered, distorted guitar often produces a sound that's hopeful. Happy even. And the album's title seems to be a steadfast resolution to get past former pain. But when asked about its meaning, Vellturo said that the naming process wasn't that deliberate. In fact, it came from a text message she sent to her agent after being asked to open for a band looking for a support act.

"And I was like, 'What's the word on this?' And he was like, 'They're taking their friends out, they need a stronger support act.' Because one of the first bands was their friends and they didn't have a good pull, plus they needed the second act to be bigger than me — or that's what I took away from it. And I just went out with my friends drinking," Vellturo said with a laugh. "And I texted my agent back in all caps, 'I'll SHOW YOU STRONGER,' like, 'I'll show you a stronger support option.'"

But as she looked at her message, the words just seemed to fit.

"It was like a lightbulb went off. This actually explains how I feel what this album is about. So, it was super accidental, and yeah, I'm still not sure if I'm showing myself stronger or people that are listening to it," she said. "... It's kind of open to interpretation."

Fittingly, Vellturo said that sometimes the meaning of various songs can change depending on how she's feeling when she's performing them.

"If I'm frustrated, I feel like I can pull different things from that. There's a couple songs that no matter what, when I hit a certain point, I get really into it, like 'temporary tantrum' at the bridge part," she said. "... It definitely depends on the mood and there's so much stuff going on onstage. Half the time I'm like, 'Oh my God, I can't hear myself.' Or I'm thinking, 'I hope it sounds good out there,' and I get really caught up in it, which I have to work on, because I can't hear what it's going to sound like in the end."

But it is that openness and variability in the meaning and interpretation of Vellturo's music that is perhaps the draw. Similarly to her album title, Vellturo said she got the name pronoun by accident when her friend suggested it, but it ended up fitting much better than Monachopsis — her original name that means the "the subtle but persistent feeling of being out of place."

"It was all just very quick. I didn't think at the time, 'Everyone's going to ask you why you're called this,' but I never put that together in my head until after the fact and I was like, 'Fuck, I need to come up with something,'" Vellturo said. "But I'm a bad liar, I hate lying or faking something, so I still always tell that original story. But I started learning more about pronouns then. Like, 'Oh yeah, they can be the subject or the object,' I talked with friends, too, like, 'How can I make this maybe make more sense than just what it was to begin with?' And I feel like, yeah, looking back it's a great, perfect name for the project as a whole, but definitely was very accidental and I didn't realize until way after the fact."

Vellturo is not nonbinary herself but as a queer artist is sensitive to the fact that the word "pronoun" itself holds a lot of meaning to many gender non-conforming people in the LGBTQ community.

"I think it grabs people a lot and they'll go and listen. But I think in general, just being a queer artist and going out and touring with primarily all guys, I'll get people coming up to me and saying, 'I almost never see girls doing shows like this,' which is sad, but also just cool. I'm happy to be out there and not only representing women but also anything besides a cis white dude," she said with a laugh.

But gender is rarely, if ever, her focus creatively.

"I would say I'm a woman and I'm she/her, but I don't use that as much to identify who I am. I feel like I'm just Alyse and there are certain things I love and I don't feel like it has to do with [gender]. But I know tons of people do, and I probably even [do too and I] just don't realize it. So, it's kind of hard to say if it even affects the music at all. I'm sure it does, but I very rarely think about it," she said. "... It turns into this thing where I'm putting [music] out and sharing with the world and going on tour and playing it live, which is amazing. But at the end of the day, it's mostly me trying to sort out what's going on in my head."

### Applause!

> "I would say I'm a woman and I'm she/her, but I don't use that as much to identify who I am. I feel like I'm just Alyse and there are certain things I love and I don't feel like it has to do with [gender]."

### INFO

**pronoun in Lansing**

The Loft located at 414 E. Michigan Ave. in Lansing on Monday, Sept. 9. Find out more information about the show online at theloftlansing.com and about pronoun at musicpronoun.com.

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# Applause!

# Firsts, Classics and Future Projects: An Overview of The Ringwald Theatre's Upcoming Shows

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

Artistic Director Joe Bailey, left, alongside his husband Brandy Joe Plambeck, who serves as the theater's media director. BTL Photo: Eve Kucharski

Now steadily into the start of its second decade in existence, fans of Ferndale's Ringwald Theatre will know it for its seasons of uncharacteristic takes on classic performances and unique choice of new works. According to its official history, chosen productions blur "the lines between race, income, religion and sexuality."

"I'm very big on telling stories and telling stories that people don't necessarily know. So, no tea, no shade, but you won't see 'The Odd Couple' here, you won't see 'Boeing-Boeing' here, because they've both been done a gillion and one times," said Artistic Director Joe Bailey. "They're great shows, I love them, but people have had a chance to see them multiple times. So, that's not interesting to me. I want people to be able to see stuff that they maybe haven't seen or haven't seen in a while."

In addition to his role as artistic director, Bailey is a co-founder of the theater, having started it in 2007 alongside his husband Brandy Joe Plambeck, who serves as the theater's media director. He said that each season tends to include productions that fit into four key slots.

"We've gotten in the habit over the last few years of having a classic slot where we do a show that's considered a classic. It's not necessarily an overdone show, but this last year was 'Death of a Salesman' and then we had done 'A Streetcar Named Desire' before that and we're doing 'Of Mice and Men' this coming season. We also usually try to do a big fat musical, whether it's a brand-new one like when we did 'Heathers: The Musical' or 'RENT' — we were the first local, professional company to do that," Plambeck said. "[And] we always try to do something campy and something gay."

## An Upcoming First

This season is breaking new ground for the theater with its production of "High School Musical" that's running now through Sept. 16. Plambeck is directing the show and he said it's the theater's first stab at a show for young adults. Despite the fact that it's coming with a twist, he said he wants to stay true to the widespread appeal of the original.

"I want it to be something where people who are gaga, head over heels for it — whether they were when it first came out — or if they're young today and love it on the Disney Channel, they can come and enjoy it," Plambeck said. "But there's this aspect of the angle we're coming at it [from] that if you're an adult you could come and enjoy it as well."

That angle involves the casting of Joe Bailey in the part of the show's main, often bubble gum pink-clad antagonist Sharpay Evans.

"So, our 'High School Musical' is going to be very interesting just because it's not like we're doing a parody, because first of all it's illegal to do that, like Disney will hunt you down. But we just wanted to cast older people in it and see what that would bring to the part. And casting a guy as Sharpay, not changing the gender, you know Sharpay is still this high school girl, but having an older gentleman who is very funny in it, in drag, play the part," Plambeck said with a laugh.

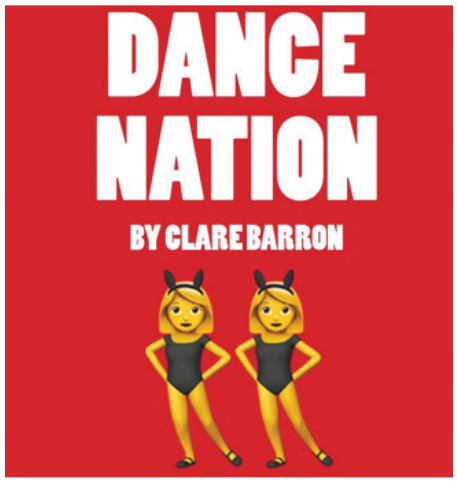
## Looking Forward

When asked what shows the couple was most excited about putting on, Bailey said he can't wait for Clare Barron's "Dance Nation" to debut, currently scheduled for Feb. 21 through March 16 of 2020.

"I'm excited for everything, but I'm super excited for a play called 'Dance Nation,' which was shortlisted for the Pulitzer Prize this year, because that script is bananas. And Brandy Joe is directing it and I'm very eager to see how it's going to turn out. I read it like, 'Oh, my God.' It's about a group of 13-year-old girls and one 13-year-old boy who are in a competitive dance troupe, like a 'Dance Moms' sort of scenario, but the actors are played of all different ages playing 13," Bailey said. "So, you could have a 70-year-old, 25, 30, 50 — whatever you want and whoever is right for the part. And at one point, the girls grow fangs, and it's so great and I love it so much."

Plambeck said he's eager to take on the directing challenge because even the show's physical script has its own flair.

"It's very poetic. And the way it's written on the page, the text gets giant at some points and it's like, 'How do you interpret this?' ... It also says that even though they are in a dance troupe, it's fine if none of the actors have any dance training or experience. Or if they're not good at dance it's even better, it says. So, it kind of alleviates this worry of, 'Oh, I must be a good dancer because I'm playing this dancer in a dance troupe.' It's like, 'Hey, bring whatever age you are and whatever dance skill level you have and just bring it to the table and really give into this world,'" Plambeck said. "I think it's incredibly exciting."




### INFO

**The Ringwald's upcoming shows**

Find out more information about upcoming productions online at theringwald.com.

**2019:**

High School Musical
Aug. 23 - Sept. 16

Tiny Beautiful Things
Oct. 11 - Nov. 4

A Very Golden Girls Christmas
Nov. 22 - Dec. 16

**2020:**

Torch Song
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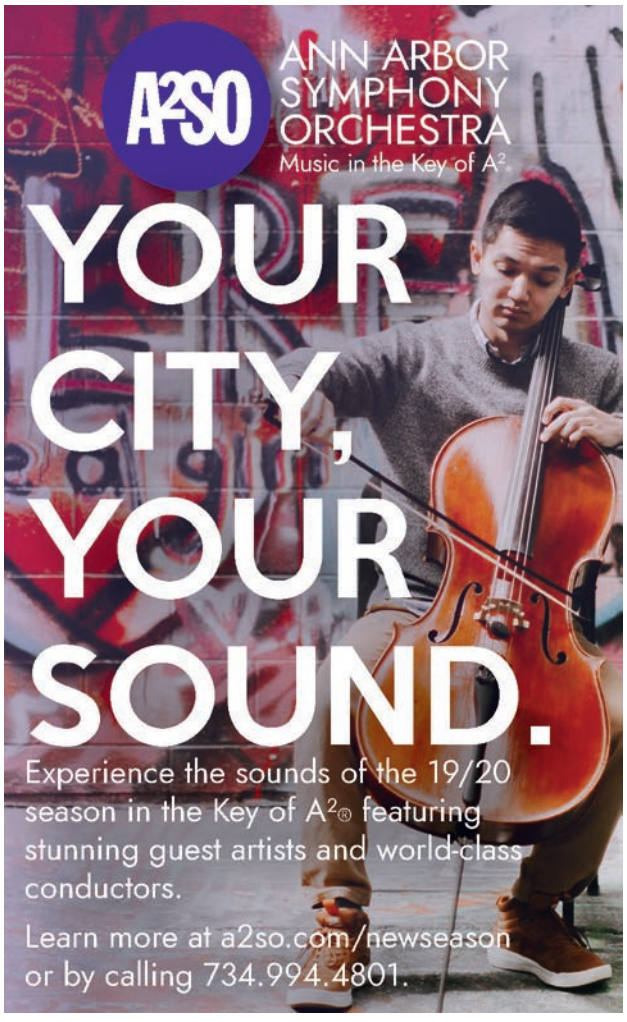
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# Ferndale's Slipstream Theatre Initiative Works to 'Entertain, Educate and Illuminate'

Applause!

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

When Artistic Director Bailey Boudreau got the idea to start the Slipstream Theatre Initiative he was working as a theater director out of West Bloomfield High School. As talented as many of his students were, Boudreau couldn't help but notice that most of them weren't getting any performance experience outside of their school productions. Beyond that, he felt they weren't getting a chance to understand the deep messages behind many of the works they performed.

"Shows that I had loved like 'Doll's House' and 'Hedda Gabler,' every time I saw them done they were just like museum pieces and we kind of ignored the fact that they were banned at their time. They were about women doing the unthinkable and it was very progressive at the time. ... Young people reading these classics [at school] aren't necessarily really seeing that if they see a production." Boudreau said. "And I thought, 'Someone needs to do shows like that, where they relate these struggles and these issues to things that are happening currently.'"

That germ of an idea eventually resulted in today's Slipstream Theatre Initiative, and now the Ferndale company is gearing up for a sixth season. Just as initially planned, each of the company's shows aims not only to entertain but to provide a deeper message, one that's often tied to social justice causes.

"As current affairs change, as new laws are made or not made, political campaigns are held and breaking news happens every day, there's never a shortage of an issue. Next season, we're dealing with immigration, which we've not dealt with before. We're delving a little bit more into gender identity and then also we're really looking at what a family is in today's society, among many other things," Boudreau said. "That's three out of our six shows."

## Creating Its Own Slipstream

The company's name is intentionally related to its greater mission, too. Ask Boudreau and he'll tell you about the three technical definitions of the word "slipstream." The first is based in physics.

"It is the force that carries particles along with it in a jet stream. [With] a mother dolphin, her children will be carried in her slipstream that's created by her floating. So, it's a way of getting something from one point to another without being the actual unit, [the] tangible thing that is moving," he said. "And then in literature, it is a genre that combines two or more genres into one that cannot be defined, which felt very much like us, and this state when you are dreaming that allows you to access your memories and, supposedly, past lives."

Past lives for Slipstream is taken to mean classic works. The company is certainly no stranger to taking audiences through seemingly disparate topics, settings and characters into its own reinterpretations.

"Taking the classic in our slipstream, moving it toward something different without actually changing it," Boudreau said.

Take its current production of "The Frogs." Described as a "loving homage to the Greek classical comedy by Aristophanes," the show "is given new life through the magic of Stephen Sondheim with lyrics by Bert Shevlove and Nathan Lane." It also blends the work of George Bernard Shaw and Shakespeare while recalling audiences to their "passion for art, truth, love and of course ... theater!"

## Looking Ahead

Though the search for brand-new takes on classics never stops at Slipstream, as the end of its season draws closer the planning process goes into overdrive.

"We don't really stop. We end our season in October, we go into rehearsal for the next season generally in November. So, as soon as we've announced a season and we have solidified our dates and all of that, we start moving onto the next season," Boudreau said.

Since the company is a closed one, auditions for actors outside of the regular performers aren't usually held at the start of each season. However, Boudreau said that interested performers are welcome

Artistic Director Bailey Boudreau

to submit a headshot and resume for consideration — especially if a project calls for the representation of a character who can't be portrayed by the existing cast members.

"I think that we live in a time where, finally, people are starting to embrace differences and understand more that we are all so uniquely different in so many ways as protected classes continue to grow. I think theater is something that is meant to entertain, educate and illuminate and you can't do that by featuring one kind of person," he said. "You can't change someone's mind by telling an all-white story all the time. You can't make someone see something differently if you don't present something different for them to see."

For example, Boudreau said that he feels confident directing shows that have LGBTQ themes because of his own identity as a gay man but will consult with others before taking on projects that include different identities.

"When we did 'P.Y.G.,' the original work based on Pygmalion, we consulted with a local trans woman on every line. She read the script and she gave us a lot of feedback and it's important to us that we represent voices and that we represent them accurately, and I think that should be important to anyone who is really being a productive member of society today," Boudreau said. "You know, I struggle with an actual articulate answer on why we choose to feature diversity and inclusion, because I think we should all be doing it. It seems to me like absolute insanity that it's not something that is just done everywhere, always, all the time."

*To learn more about the Slipstream Theatre Initiative visit slipstreamti.com. "The Frogs" will run through Sept. 29.*

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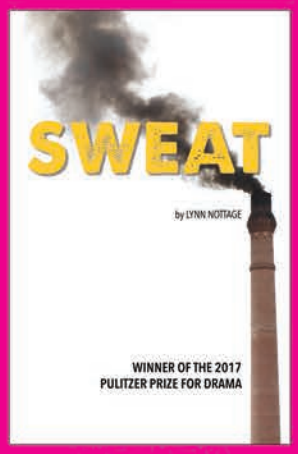


**Nov. 1 – 17, 2019**
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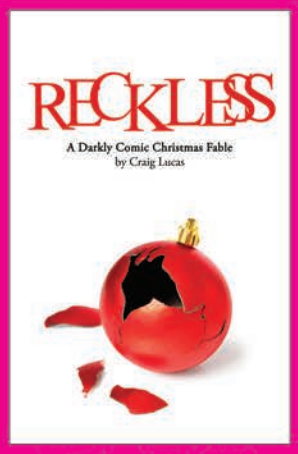


**Nov. 15 – Dec. 8, 2019**
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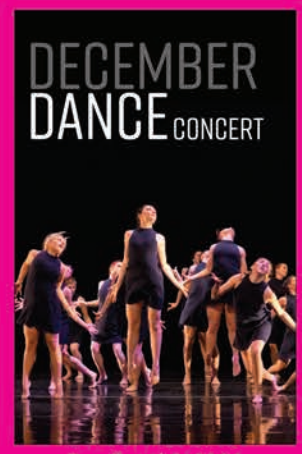
**Dec. 4 – 15, 2019**
Bonstelle Theatre




**Dec. 7 and 8, 2019**
Music Hall

**Feb. 7 – 23, 2020**
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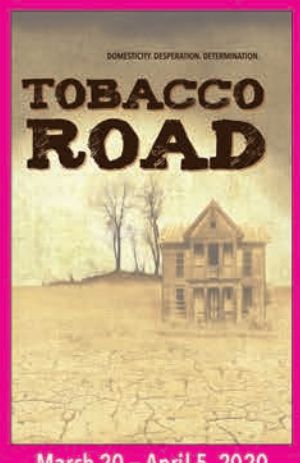


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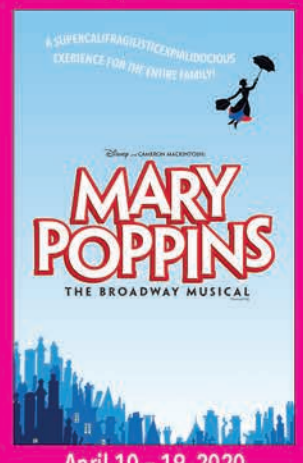


**April 10 – 19, 2020**
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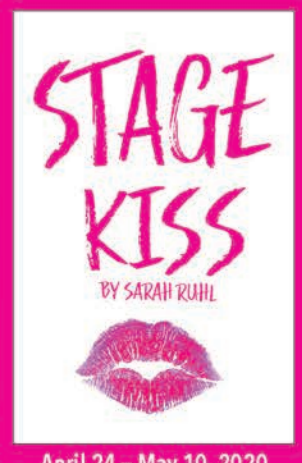


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# PCAC is Calling All LGBTQ Artists

## The Pontiac Creative Arts Center is Accepting Submissions Through Sept. 15 for its Upcoming 'Kaleidoscope of Expression' Exhibit

**BY EVE KUCHARSKI**

Though it's arguable that June is the most significant month for the LGBTQ community, it's not uncommon for Pride celebrations to extend throughout the summer and beyond. The Pontiac Creative Arts Center is certainly extending Southeast Michigan's Pride season this year with the Oct. 12 debut of its "Kaleidoscope of Expression" exhibition. In following with its theme, the exhibit's goal is to showcasing the varied works and talents of any interested LGBTQ artists. Ronnie Karpinski is a PCAC board member and he encourages "everybody who is interested to submit" now through the Sept. 15 deadline.

"I'm actually a member of the LGBTQA+ community, and I just thought we were long overdue for a Pride exhibit. I actually don't know if we've ever had one, there's no record of one ever taking place, hence the 'Kaleidoscope of Expression' was born," he said.

Patrizia Makohon is a board member as well and the curator of this exhibit. She said that the parameters were kept broad on purpose, to encourage the participation of all kinds of talent. So far, submissions have been received mainly from the Southeast Michigan area, but there have been several from across the state of Michigan and even as far as Florida and California.

"It's open to anybody that identifies as LGBTQA+ and it's going to be a juried show, because we welcome anything whether it's two-dimensional, three-dimensional, photography, painting, sculpture, craft, metalwork, woodwork, design — and that's just the visual arts," Makohon said. "We're also encouraging performance art. And so, the parameters are really that we want a very high quality that's robust, and a show that's indicative of the deep, deep talent of that group. So, it's a way to celebrate and a way to promote art in Southeast Michigan."

Participation in "Kaleidoscope of Expression" is free and the show is made possible because of the Oakland University/Pontiac Initiative Community Impact Sponsorship Award.

"We're a 501(C)(3) nonprofit organization and like many others we are still recovering from the 2008 recession. So, before we can really launch any new exhibits or programs, we have to first secure funding," Karpinski said. "... I came across the Oakland University Pontiac Initiative grant program and applied online. And I'm happy to share that we were given the full grant of $1,900, which is what we applied for."

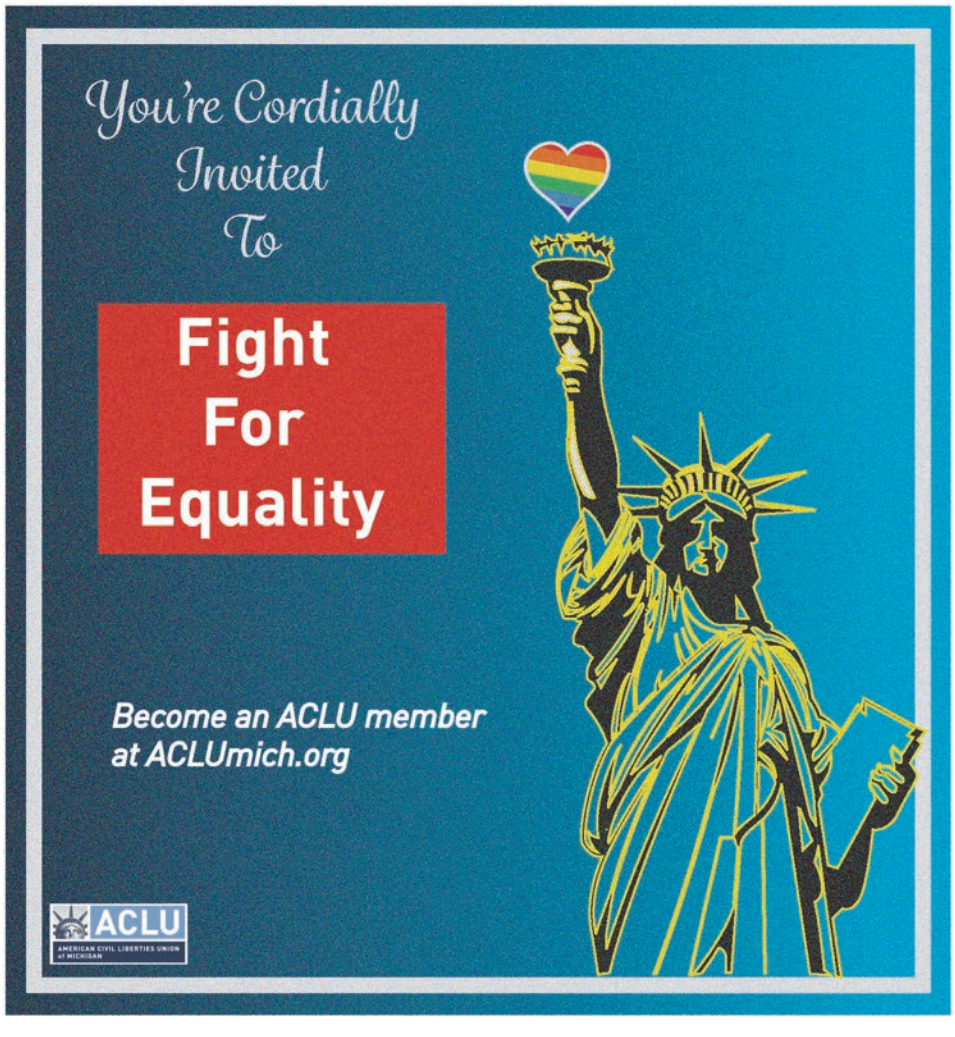
Along with some additional fundraising, Karpinski said that this show is also a direct result of a partnership with Oakland University Gender and Sexuality Center.

"We're trying to give back to them for giving to us. And also, it's a good opportunity to help some of the students who have graduated or will be graduated who are working on different types of art exhibits and bringing together different marketing materials," Karpinski said.

He added that so far, the submission process for this event has been an exciting one and both he and Makohon are hopeful that "Kaleidoscope of Expression" turns into a regularly occurring event.

"We've received several submissions from all different types of mediums and all different geographic areas. So, really, it's open to anybody and we're really excited to see where this takes us," he said. "... But also, with it being the 50th anniversary of Stonewall, we need to celebrate that and I we don't have a Pride event in Pontiac so it's our way of showcasing that. We think it's a great opportunity."

*To find out more about the exhibit and PCAC visit pontiacarts.org. Interested artists can submit their work online at http://gaybe.am/mp*



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# Shura's Art Will Go On

Photo: Hollie Fernando

## Pop's 'Anxious Lesbian Pope' on Queering Her Once-Coded Lyrics, Nearly Retiring and Her Titanic Musical

**BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI**

Album release week has Shura, synth-pop's "lesbian pope," feeling like "Ice Age" squirrel Scrat, whose acorn keeps getting away from him. "The acorn is representative of my well-being, my sanity," says the 30-year-old British musician. "And it's always a hair's breadth away."

I am Skyping with Shura, who is calling from Rough Trade, a record store in Nottingham, England, just days after the release of her second album, "Forevher," the follow-up to her 2016 debut "Nothing's Real." Named by her girlfriend, Pauline, who she met on the dating app Raya while living in London (the two were in a long-distance relationship until Shura moved to Brooklyn), the title represents "For Her," "Forever" and "Forever Her." And calling it simply "Forever" was out of the question; that name was already taken by the Spice Girls.

During our chat, and without the video feature activated because "I'm literally in a cave and look like I haven't slept," Shura discusses playing dress-up with her gay twin, her infatuation with fun nuns, writing a Titanic musical from the perspective of the icebergs and being scared of Madonna.

**After "Nothing's Real," did you anticipate making another breakup album?**

When I finished writing "Nothing's Real," I was kind of like, "I don't know if I can make another record again," because it does take so much out of you emotionally. At that moment, I just didn't feel like I felt anything at the end of that – (it) just really, really kind of sucks you dry. Not necessarily as a negative either. I was just exhausted. So I … I kind of imagined retiring!

**One and done.**

Bye! Exit stage left! I was finishing touring with Tegan and Sara and M83 and that's when I started talking to my current partner and was like, "Maybe I can write some songs again." I was attracted to someone and that was exciting, and I was writing about that. It wasn't until maybe a year into the process of writing that I was beginning to decide what to record and I was like, "Oh, shit, this is gonna be a really different record." I always love artists who do that, who make big leaps of faith and take risks; sometimes they pay off and sometimes they don't, but the fun is in trying.

**How did you decide to include lesbian nuns in the "religion (u can lay your hands on me)" video?**

I love nuns. I had this calendar as a kid called "Nuns Having Fun" and it was images of nuns smoking and riding a rollercoaster. Images of women who are traditionally not meant to have any sort of worldly pleasure in that sense. It's a life of: You make a commitment to God, and so you see these people doing naughty things and it's something that does spark joy and makes you laugh and smile. So I've always loved nuns. And then I remember seeing Jude Law in "The Young Pope" and I thought he looked amazing, and I just went, "I want to look amazing." I have this really great job where I can do that. And if you don't do that as a pop star or as a musician, I think you're missing out on one of the funnest aspects of the job.

That's something I learned from doing "Nothing's Real," because I was at a major (label) and maybe nervous about them turning me into something that I wasn't, which they didn't, actually. But I was still

nervous about it. I really tried to cling onto, "I'm gonna wear a denim jacket and a beanie and I'm just gonna be me." And actually, I was like, "But I can be anyone? Why wouldn't I choose that? That's fun."

I used to love dressing up as a kid. I'd dress up as Zorro and Peter Pan. I remember (my brother) Nick and I doing "Beauty and the Beast" with the dress and the beast costume and I cried, and then we swapped and he wore the dress and I wore the beast costume and we were like, "This is perfect." So I've always loved inhabiting different personalities. After three years of silence, I was like, "I wanna come back and I wanna be the pope," because I thought that would be hilarious. Anxious lesbian comes back and she's the vaping, lesbian pope.

**In fact, you've envisioned the entire album as a lesbian musical of sorts with a similar queer, religious motif.**

Yeah. Oh my god, I still really wanna do it.

**Have you truly given this much thought?**

I want to get someone good to write the script, for sure. I was thinking that it would be absolutely hilarious if ("Fleabag" creator) Phoebe Waller-Bridge wrote the script for it; she's just in my head right now because she's sort of everywhere. I feel like she'd nail it. I started thinking about the story and was like, "Maybe it has to be someone who's a girl growing up in a convent school." That's where it would start. I also just like the idea of it being a dream sequence with popes and lesbian nuns.

**And maybe a cameo from Sister Mary Clarence. Let her run the convent for lesbian nuns. In fact, maybe Sister Mary Clarence has been a closeted lesbian all these years and she finally has the opportunity to come out during your musical.**

I mean, that would be amazing. I feel like you've thought about this more than I have so maybe we should get you to write the script.

**Call Phoebe. We'll collaborate.**

Yeah, perfect. Amazing. We'll do one night on Broadway.

**One night *only*!**

Of course. It has to be one night only. If I make a musical that's more successful than any album I've done, that would be amazing, especially given that I really didn't like musicals growing up because I kept hearing my brother rehearse them and I was like, "Shut up. I don't care about tomorrow. I do not care! Annie, leave me alone!"

**Do you have serious aspirations to pursue a musical?**

I've written a musical! I wrote one when I was at university. I can't say it was very good. And it was very short, so I'd have to develop it. But I wrote a musical about the story of the Titanic from the point of view of the iceberg. It was this love story between two icebergs (laughs) in the Atlantic. And there was like the Greek chorus, so to speak, but they were seagulls. There was one bit where they ended up in Chile and there were penguins and there was a song called "It's Chilly in Chile," and the main iceberg was called Ferdinand and he ended up obviously dying because the Titanic crashes into him. So it's a tragedy. I don't think I've told anyone that before, so there you go. Exclusive.

**Based on the "religion" video, I assume you may have been a bit obsessed with Madonna's "Like a Prayer."**

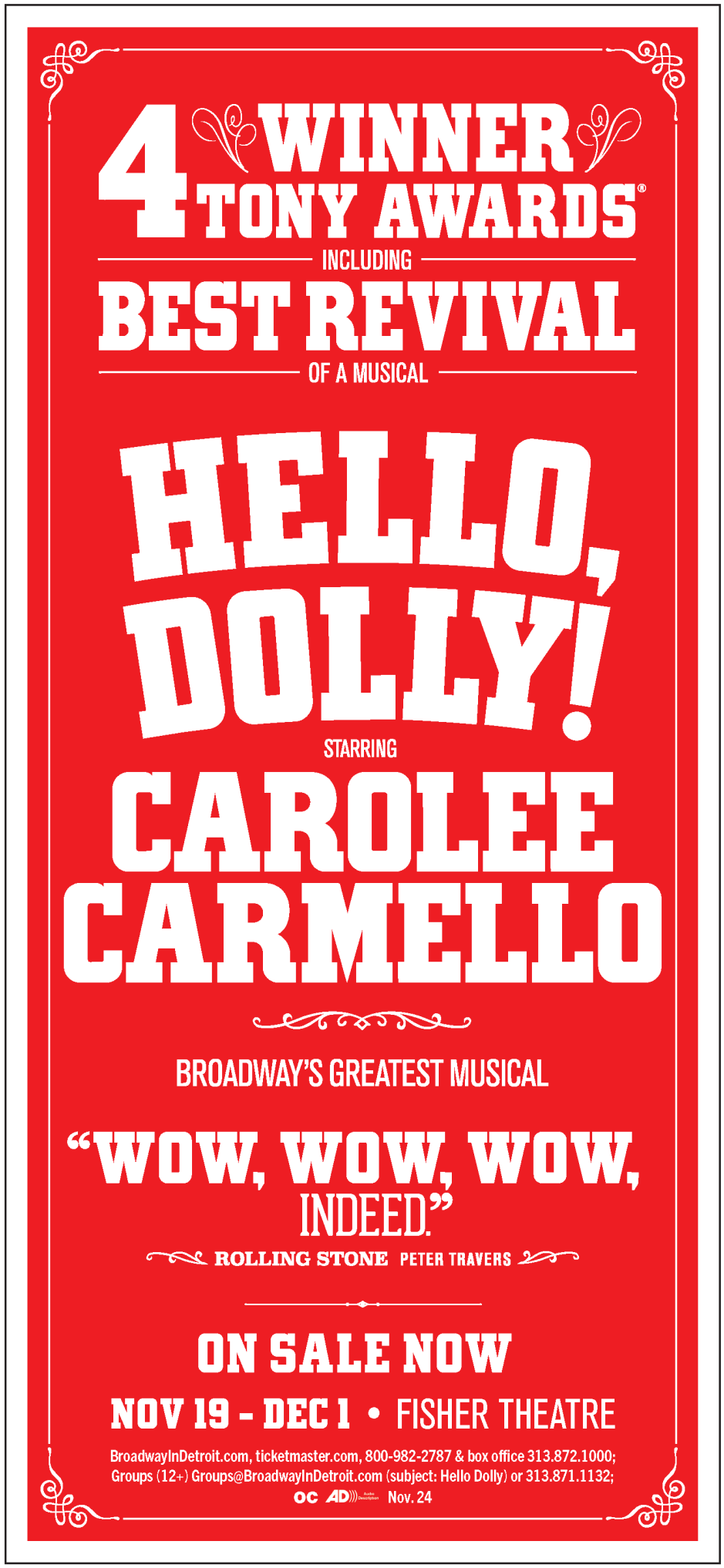
You reckon? (Laughs) We had "The Immaculate Collection" on VHS, which I suspect was a way of keeping my twin and I occupied for large swaths of time when we were being a bit hyperactive. We would sit in front of the television and stare, and that would just be us for a couple of hours. So she's been a huge inspiration musically and absolutely (the "religion") video is intended as a nod and homage. I discovered the other day that I released the record on her birthday, so that feels like a nice kind of full circle. I was tempted to be like, "Happy Birthday, Madonna!" and send her a link to my album but then got too scared because I thought she'd just scream at me.

**"Forevher" manages to be both explicitly queer and incidentally queer. And your queerness has been a major talking point during recent interviews. Did you expect the queerness of this album to be as big of a focus as it's been while promoting the album?**

When you come from a queer perspective, you never really feel like what you're doing is super gay because it's just what you're doing. It's only when you start to see it through the eyes of other people – when you see fans and they're so excited that it is explicitly queer and they're like, "Oh my god, this is the album that I needed when I was a teenager that I didn't have."

I did an interview recently and the headline was, "Shura sometimes forgets she's a lesbian" (laughs). I just forget in the same way that I forget that I am a woman sometimes because I don't really wake up every day going, "Where am I gonna take my vagina today?" If you are going to be openly queer, it's always going to be a part of any conversation. For "Nothing's Real," actually, it was still a talking point even though I never used a pronoun. Even when I wasn't being explicitly queer lyrically, it was still a part of the conversation.

See **Shura**, continued on p. 44



► **Shura**
Continued from p. 43

**How does it feel to be using specific gender pronouns on this album?**

It's fun to be able to do it and be like, "I don't care. I don't care that someone might go, 'Oh, shit, OK! Let me switch this off.'"

**How were you writing about being queer at the age of 16, when you first started writing songs?**

The language I would use was very decorative. I would use metaphors and allegories, and it would be much closer to poetry lyrically. I would never be specific about what was going on. I would kind of talk in…

**In code?**

Exactly. But I understood the code. And anyone who knew what it was about would know the code; anyone who was a fan, if they understood that I was gay, would also get the code. But I think just growing up in general as a writer, I've found where I thrive is in the really mundane and the really specific.

*Solution to Q Puzzle p. 49*

That's the thing: When you first start making music, it's normally because you're a fan, right? It takes you a while sometimes to discover what it is that you're good at. Maybe you try to emulate some of your heroes and then over time you discover what you're about. As a kid, I would've loved to have been a rock star. I would've wanted to be in a rock band and shredded (laughs), but I'll let someone else be good at that and I'll do this. One of the most important things about being creative is knowing what you're *not* good at.

**What else are you not good at?**

My singing voice, I wouldn't describe it as especially acrobatic. I have, I would say, a relatively delicate voice. Some of my heroes – some of the people whose voices I love, like Whitney Houston and Mariah Carey – they *are* voices. You hear them and you know who it is straightaway, and I was just like, "Well, I can't sing like that so I'm gonna stop trying and I have to find the way my voice works." Another thing I'm not good at it, apparently, is buying presents, which was really tragic to discover.

**Who told you that you weren't a good gift giver?**

My girlfriend! I thought I was brilliant at buying presents until this relationship. But I don't know whether I'm not very good or she's just very, very picky about what she likes. (Laughs)

**I used to buy Mariah Carey albums and give them to people as gifts even if they weren't fans.**

When "Nothing's Real" came out, my twin bought 10 copies of the album and gave them to everyone he worked with. (Laughs)

**How has love changed the way you approach queerness in your work?**

I'm exploring a different side of my queer romantic experience, which is like … joy (laughs). For a start! The queer stories we're exposed to are quite dramatic stories; in film and music, we don't get to see a lot of happiness or things working. This record is about a three-year period, a little time capsule of a really lovely time ... before it goes wrong! And hopefully it never will (laughs). It's made me sort of feel braver in terms of expressing my queerness, but then also makes me feel more vulnerable.

Declaring being in love is putting yourself in a vulnerable position. But I'm somewhat used to putting my life experiences on record, so for me it's maybe not as big of a deal because it's just what I've always done. I guess it's a bigger audience now (laughs) than when I was 16 and recording on a MiniDisc recorder for my friends at school, who were like, "Ugh. She just wishes she were Avril Lavigne."

**What is Pauline's favorite song on the album?**

Her favorite song is "The Stage." I think she likes the rhythm of it because it's quite weird. It's quite a weird *record*. Quite a challenge. I was a bit nervous about putting it out before the record was released because, musically, it's a demanding listen because of these huge shifts and chord progressions and key changes that never really materialize. I finished the record in January and was like, "I just delivered something. I don't know what it is. I like it. But I don't know what it is."

**Do you know now?**

I definitely have a better handle on it now. And actually, this is (laughs) gonna sound awful, probably, but the more I get to know it, the more proud of myself I am. The more I kind of impress myself. Like everyone else, I'm still getting to know it. It's like having a kid and when they get to be about 4, 5 or 6 and you start to realize they're developing a real personality and you're like, "Oh, I made one of these children! Great!" That's kind of like me with my album. I'm like, "Oh, wow. This is all right. Well done."

*As editor of Q Syndicate, the international LGBTQ wire service, Chris Azzopardi has interviewed a multitude of superstars, including Cher, Meryl Streep, Mariah Carey and Beyoncé. His work has also appeared in The New York Times, Vanity Fair, GQ and Billboard. Reach him via Twitter @chrisazzopardi.*

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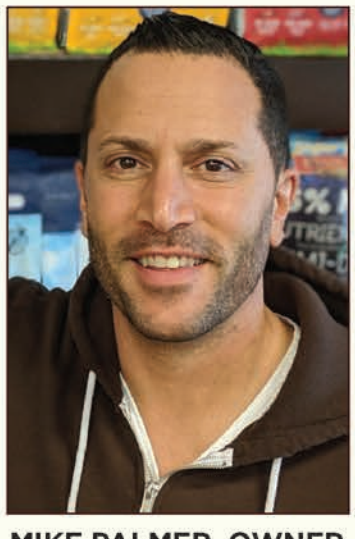

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## Cleopatra Boy

**Sept. 13 – Sept. 28**

**The Andy**

**ahostofpeople.org/cleopatra-boy.**

"Cleopatra Boy" is an original play that uses the history of Cleopatra combined with music, choreography, bold design and spoken word to illustrate how women, people of color and LGBTQ individuals in positions of power risk losing control of their own images against the dominance of white patriarchy, resulting in false narratives and misrepresentations. The piece also pulls from restorative justice practices in order to reveal the motives of the western tellers of Cleopatra's story and address some of that misinformation, in service of a celebration of women, POC and queer leaders — past, present and future.

Theater ensemble A Host of People will present the world premiere of the original play at The Andy. A Host of People has a reputation for creating theater that is as challenging as it is inviting, and they continue to produce work that celebrates identity, self-expression and the complex nature of the human experience in this contemporary moment. Their latest original work, "Cleopatra Boy," is supported, in part, by the New England Foundation for the Arts' prestigious National Theater Project Creation and Touring Grant. This national recognition comes after previewing "Cleopatra Boy" at FURY Factory Festival of Ensemble and Devised Theater in San Francisco, Cleveland Public Theatre's Test Flight and the 7th Annual Sidewalk Festival Detroit.

"Cleopatra Boy" is conceived and directed by Sherrine Azab and Jake Hooker. The performance brings to light how women (and other non-straight/white/male) leaders' histories are rewritten, maligned or erased. The iconic Egyptian pharaoh's historic, mythic and fictional representations across time inspired A Host of People to create a performance that speaks to the present moment. A theatrical thought experiment that is part pageant, part courtroom drama, the audience will shape-shift from spectators, to community members, to witnesses as the piece collectively addresses the injustice of losing control of our own narratives in order to rethink and remake history.

## *TYLER, THE CREATOR AT THE MASONIC TEMPLE*

On Saturday, Sept. 7, Grammy Award-nominated rapper, singer and songwriter Tyler, the Creator will make his way to Detroit's Masonic Temple. On this tour he will share music from his latest album "Igor." Find out more information online at themasonic.com.

## *OUTINGS*

### Thursday, September 5

**Pride Night at Thunderbowl!** 8 p.m. Meet & Greet First Thursday of every month, unlimited bowling, shoe rental, private room, private bar area, drink specials, billiard room, 250 foot video wall. Come as you are!! Thunderbowl Arena, 4200 Allen Road,Allen Park. 313-928-4688 www.thunderbowl.org/ http://www.thunderbowl.org

### Saturday, September 7

**LGBT Community Chat** 11 a.m. Saturday LGBT Chat is an on going social discussion group meets every week to discuss issues LGBT people face. Coming out , dating, and much more. Come join us every Saturday at 11 am. Java Hut Ferndale, 165 w 9 mile,Ferndale.

### Monday, September 9

**Stand with Trans 2019 Support Groups – Macomb County** 7:30 p.m. Macomb Teen/Youth Support Group: All youth are welcome to attend this FREE group. Come and meet other trans* youth and teens and support each other through your journeys. We meet the 2nd Monday of each month. Dakota High School, 21051 21 Mile Road,Macomb. 586-723-2700

**LGBT Game Night** 7 p.m. LGBT Game Night is an opportunity for all LGBT people and allies to come play a board game, drink coffee and socialize with other LGBT individuals. Java Hut, 165 W NIne Mile,Ferndale.

### Thursday, September 12

**Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups – Farmington Hills – Oakland County** 8 p.m. All youth are welcome to attend this free group. This group meets the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month at Orchard United Methodist Church. Oakland United Methodist Church, 30450 Farmington Road,Farmington. g

### Friday, September 13

Mission Equality Fall Reception. Held at Roostertail, 100 Marquette Drive, Detroit. Cocktail Hour 6 p.m., Plated dinner 7 p.m. with keynote speaker Attorney General Dana Nessel. Purchase tickets at www. equalitymi.org/missionequality.

### Saturday, September 14

An Evening with Ozone House. Cocktails 6 p.m., program 7:15 p.m. Celebrate the 11th Annual Fall fundraiser and 5oth Anniversary. Seated family style dinner, live and silent auction, youth speakers and entertaining MC, at Domino's World Resource Center, Lobby F, 30 Frank Lloyd Wright Drive, Ann Arbor. Tickets at ozonehouse.org

### Sunday, September 15

**Stand with Trans Wyandotte Support Group for Trans Youth and Parents of Trans Individuals** 5 p.m. There is no fee to attend the groups. This group meets the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month @ St. Stephens Episcopal Church. 2803 1st Street,Wyandotte. 734-747-4363 www.standwithtrans.org

# Editor's Pick

## EZRA FURMAN AT EL CLUB

Famed also for his work with The Visions, Ezra Furman is also a solo musician who has released and contributed to dozens of albums over the course of his career. Now heading to El Club on Sunday, Sept. 8, he will be accompanied by Stef Chura. Find out more information online at elclubdetroit.com.

### Wednesday, September 18

**Stand with Trans Support Groups – Livonia – Wayne County** 7:30 p.m. Free to all, group meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month @ Emmanuel Lutheran Church. Parent, 34567 7 Mile Road,Livonia. www.standwithtrans.org

### Tuesday, September 24

**Strand with Trans Support Groups – Ann Arbor – Washtenaw** 7:30 p.m. Trans Support Group meeting the 4th Tuesday of each month @ Journey of Faith Christian Church. Parent Support Group Facilitator – Yma Johnson, ymaj1968@gmail.com or 734-780-4092. Trans Youth Support Group Facilitator – Joy Cavanaugh, LPC Journey of Faith Christian Church, 1900 Manchester Road,Ann Arbor. http://www.standwithtrans.org

## MUSIC & MORE

**CATS** The record-breaking musical spectacular by Andrew Lloyd Webber that has captivated audiences in over 30 countries and 15 languages, is now on tour across North America and is coming to Detroit! Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd.,Detroit. 313-872-1000 http://broadwayindetroit.com/shows/cats

**Lenny Kravitz at the Fox Theatre** September 5, 8 p.m. Extending a two-year world tour, Lenny Kravitz is returning to the Midwest for the North American leg. He'll be stopping by The Fox Theatre playing music from his 2018 album "Raise Vibration." Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave.,Detroit.

**Social Distortion, Flogging Molly, The Devil Makes Three, Le Butcherettes** September 6, 6 p.m. Punk rock bands Social Distortion and Flogging Molly are teaming up with The Devil Makes Three and Le Butcherettes on their summer tour. The four bands will head to the Michigan Lottery Amphitheatre at Freedom Hill, 14900 Metro Pkwy,Sterling Heights. (586) 268-9700 freedomhillampitheater.com

**Reba McEntire** September 7, 7:30 p.m. Comes to the Michigan Lottery Ampitheatre at Freedom Hill in Sterling Heights, 14900 Metro Pkwy,Sterling Heights. (586) 268-9700 freedomhillampitheater.com

**Jonas Brothers** September 7, 7:30 p.m. The Grammy Award-nominated powerhouse trio are heading to Little Caesars Arena on their "Happiness Begins Tour." This tour coincides with the release of their anticipated "Happiness Begins" album. gaybe.am/JP Little Caesar's Arena, 2645 Woodward Avenue,Detroit.

**Snarky Puppy** September 8, 7 p.m. A Brooklyn-based collective that grew out of the celebrated jazz program at the University of North Texas, the band — which features a rotating cast of musicians playing guitars, percussion, horns, keyboards, and even strings Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Ave,Ann Arbor. http://ums.org/performance/snarky-puppy-2019/

**Amadeus – Film with Live Orchestra** September 15, 2 p.m. Winner of eight Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Actor, the 1984 motion picture Amadeus makes its UMS debut projected on a large screen, with Mozart's celebrated works performed live by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Ave,Ann Arbor. http://ums.org/performance/amadeus/

**K. Flay** September 20, 7 p.m. Singer, songwriter, rapper, and musician K. Flay was nominated for two awards at the 60th annual Grammy Awards. The Crofoot, 1 s. Sagina,Pontiac. 248-850-9333 www.thecrofoot.com

**All About Eve – National Theatre Live in HD** Sept. 22, 7 p.m. Gillian Anderson (X-Files) and Lily James (Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again!) star in, the story of Margo Channing. A legend and true star of the theater, the spotlight is hers and Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St.,Ann Arbor. https://ums.org/performance/national-theatre-live-in-hd-all-about-eve/

**Sara Bareilles** October 5, 8 p.m. A Grammy, Tony and Emmy Award-nominated singer, songwriter, actress and author, Oct. 5, she'll be visiting Detroit's Fox Theatre with Emily King. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave.,Detroit. 3

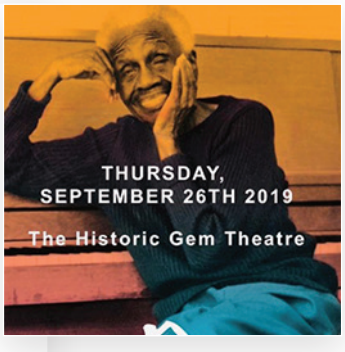
**Come From Away** Broadway's COME FROM AWAY is a Best Musical winner all across North America! Written by Tony® nominees Irene Sankoff and David Hein, and helmed by this year's Tony-winning Best Director, Christopher Ashley. Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd.,Detroit. 313-872-1000 http://broadwayindetroit.com/shows/come-from-away

**Dionne Warwick** 7:30 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 6, Dionne Warwick will come to the Sound Board at MotorCity Casino Hotel. Find out more online at gaybe.am/TM Motor City Casino Sound Board, 2901 Grand River Ave.,Detroit. 313-309-4700 www.motorcitycasino.com.

**Robyn** October 8, 6:30 p.m. The Swedish pop singer will perform at Detroit's Masonic Temple as part of her Honey Tour with special guests ESG. Detroit Masonic Temple, 3011 W. Grand Blvd, #f100,Detroit. 800-854-2196 templedetroit.com http://aegworldwide.com

# Editor's Pick

## 2019 REC VOICES GALA




On Thursday, Sept. 26, the Ruth Ellis Center will celebrate its 20th anniversary at the 2019 VOICES Gala. The Center's signature event, the VOICES Gala is a fundraiser that provides critical funding to its operations and recognizing its most ardent supporters. Guests will enjoy a silent auction, strolling dinner, complimentary bar service and more. This year's headliner is Emmy Award winner Wanda Sykes. Find out more online at rec.org.

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# Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

## 'Skate Kitchen,' meet 'Betty'

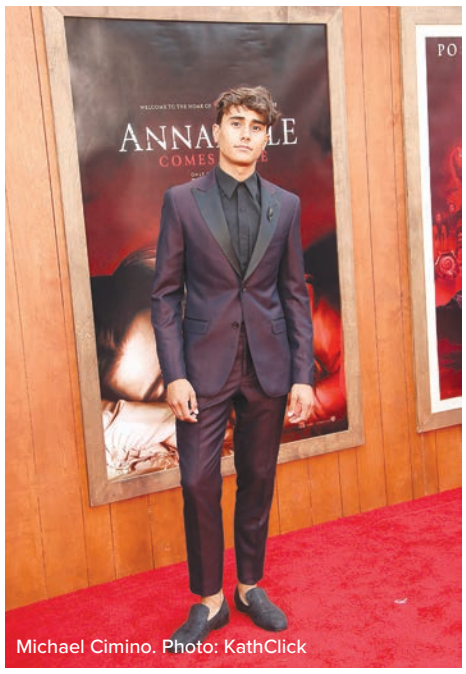
It's entirely possible that you missed 2018's low-key indie charmer "Skate Kitchen," the one about a teenage girl who finds community with an all-female skateboard crew. It was a small release and had the bad luck to hit theaters at roughly the same time as Jonah Hill's all-boy version, "Mid90s." But it's worth finding now, and you'll want to, if only to prep for HBO's upcoming series called "Betty." Created by "Skate Kitchen"'s director Crystal Moselle and Lesley Arfin, the creator of the series "Love," "Betty" will take "Skate Kitchen"'s premise and extend it for a six-episode first season. Rachelle Vinberg will reprise her "SK" role as Camille, the lonely suburban girl who finds friendship and purpose with her new friends. And other "SK" alumni – Nina Moran, Kabrina Adams, Dede Lovelace and Ajani Russell – will pick their characters back up, as well. Expect plenty of casual young lesbianism when this comedy-drama rolls by sometime in 2020.

## FX and Christine Vachon bring the 'Pride'

If you remember watching the somewhat dorky (OK, very dorky, but also fully well-meaning) miniseries "When We Rise" and thinking to yourself, "OK, where is the queer Ken Burns(es) who'll take this historical material and make a kickass documentary that engages audiences with the same sense of urgency and intelligence that the LGBTQ+ community has expressed at every step of our civil rights movement over the past 60 years?" Well, we may have an answer to your question. "Pride," a six-part documentary series from producer Christine Vachon's Killer films and Refinery29, will chronicle as many of those real-life narrative strands as possible. Each section will be handled by a different acclaimed queer filmmaker, and go deeper into the stories that shaped where we've all been. Right now we don't know which filmmakers are attached, or even when it's going to air, but we do know that FX is eventually going to present it as part of their upcoming slate of docs. We suggest bookending every episode of "Pose," but that's just us being really smart about marketing.

## The 'Love, Simon' TV series has a cast!

Fresh faces fill the cast of the upcoming series "Love, Simon." The TV adaptation of the sleeper hit film that was itself an adaptation of the YA novel "Simon vs The Homo Sapiens Agenda" has found its young leading man. His name is Michael Cimino (cinephiles are now scratching their heads, but no, it's not the late director of

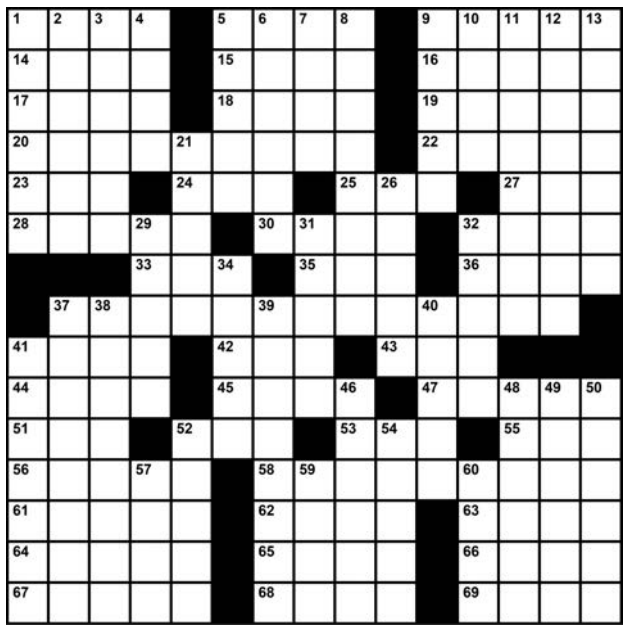

Michael Cimino. Photo: KathClick

"The Deer Hunter") and he was recently seen in "Annabelle Comes Home." He'll play a gay teen who has an entire school and family to navigate as he takes his first steps out of the closet, and who looks to Simon (Nick Robinson, from the film, who narrates here) for help with the process. And he's got a cast signing on around him: Ana Ortiz ("Ugly Betty") and James Martinez ("One Day At a Time") as his parents, and a roster of up-and-coming young stars, some of whom are making their debuts. It's a 2020 drop on Disney+ (their new streaming platform that launches later this year), so that gives all of you young people a bit of time to figure out whose password you'll be using to watch it.

## A fresh new stream of 'Queer As Folk'

You've heard the rumblings about a newly rebooted "Queer As Folk," and apparently it's all still happening – although we've been denied casting news and it's causing us a lot of stress and making us write daydreamy, speculative, "QAF"-themed fiction about Ezra Miller – but it's going to cost you when it finally gets here. Originally planned for cable via Bravo, the updated story of a tightly knit queer community of people in shiny clothes has now been pushed over to the upcoming NBCUniversal streaming service (the one they say is launching in 2020). Fact: we *will* pay good money for this. Not as much as we paid for those see-through mesh shirts back in the year 2000, mind you, but we will pay, even if it means cutting the cord and watching "Real Housewives of New York" at a second location. Now, back to casting – can we get some more Sharon Gless time on this thing? It's important.

*Romeo San Vicente is ready for the Kristine W Renaissance.*



# Finding Toni

QPuzzle

## Across

1 Reproduced nonheterosexually?
5 Lube brand
9 Where bulging pecs are
14 Nathan of "The Good Wife"
15 Part of a fruity drink
16 "Couldn't get out of it"
17 Silica stone
18 Cumming on the stage
19 Cary of "Robin Hood: Men in Tights"
20 Start of a quote from Toni Morrison
22 Penetrates
23 WWII zone
24 "Xtra"'s prov.
25 Tammy Baldwin's party symbol
27 Glenn Burke stat
28 Nero's land
30 "The Bridge" poet Crane
32 Norse war god
33 Hrs. in P-town
35 Deer in Maria's song
36 Where boxers are visible
37 More of the quote
41 Bosom buddy
42 Meadow murmur
43 He cared for Samuel
44 Skirt edges
45 Some guys do it nocturnally
47 Brand for cutting leaves of grass
51 WWII battle site, for short
52 Cross-dresser's padding site
53 Personal-ad info
55 Title for Oedipus
56 Anti-homophobic, e.g.
58 End of the quote
61 "Dirty Dancing" director Ardolina
62 Very, to Verlaine
63 "Believe ___ not!"
64 Woody secretion
65 "Java" trumpeter Al
66 Kunis of "Black Swan"
67 Paid for a hand
68 Problem for skin
69 Perfect serves from Mauresmo

## Down

1 State of secrecy
2 "Tru" story subject
3 Bewitch
4 Cut
5 Warren of Billy Bean's sport
6 Frasier's ex
7 ___ instant
8 Outback bounder
9 Game with many openings
10 "Hold your horses!"
11 Royal lover of Piers Gaveston
12 Sculptor Emma
13 Solo sex, with "off"
21 Proposal in a bar
26 Adam's partner in gay Eden?
29 Makes a hole bigger
31 Statesman Stevenson
32 Do-___ situation
34 Where Caesar went to the bank?
37 1939 Cukor movie
38 David Sedaris' type of writer
39 TV wife of two gay Dicks
40 Influential member of a tribe
41 Idle fancy
46 San Francisco's Eagle, e.g.
48 Like many a Paul Cadmus painting
49 Give a loafer a new bottom
50 Actors with small parts
52 Coffee bar offering
54 Beau chaser
57 "I cannot tell ___"
59 Mabius of "The L Word"
60 Bean town?

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Affirmations FERNDALE 5:30PM-8:30PM Walk-in or by Appointment
THURSDAY
Affirmations Matrix MAC Health FERNDALE 9AM-4:30PM Walk-in or by Appointment
FRIDAY
Matrix MAC Health FERNDALE 9AM-4:30PM Walk-in or by Appointment
SATURDAY
Affirmations FERNDALE 1PM-3PM Walk-In
1ST & 3RD SATURDAYS 12:30-3pm
NO SUNDAY TESTING
Call 1.888.226.6366 or visit TimeToKnowDetroit.com to make an appointment and for information.
1(888) A CONDOM
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MATRIX MAC HEALTH IS A PROGRAM OF MATRIX HUMAN SERVICES. LEARN MORE. GIVE. VOLUNTEER. DISCOVER MATRIX AT MatrixHumanServices.org

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Established in 1980 as the first Primary Care Medical Clinic in the Detroit area specializing in our LGBTQ community.

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**We're a Recipient of the Peter M. Fox Excellence in HIV Credentialing Award** from the American Academy of HIV Medicine. Also, Dr. Benson was one of the first physicians credentialed and has maintained the AAHIV-S specialist designation since.

**Certified Clinical Research Professional** by the Society of Clinical Research Associates. A Principle Investigator in Clinical Trials since 1989 providing early access to life-saving HIV Medications.

**Extensive Network of Sensitive Specialists**
with an ongoing relationship to refer as necessary.

**There is a difference.** We're a patient-friendly Private Practice small enough to individualize care by a staff that knows you and large enough to manage all of your Primary Care Needs.

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**Dr. Benson** is an Associate Professor at Michigan State University providing training to our next generation of physicians.

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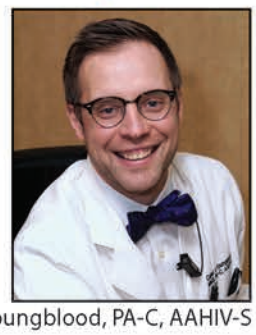
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1½ oz Tito's Handmade Vodka
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